

The Respect Circle: Ten Teachers, One Classroom Management Model

Kathryn L. Brown, B.A., B.Ed.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate
Studies in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

In this qualitative investigation, the researcher examined the experiences of 10 teachers as they implemented a classroom management model called the Respect Circle. Through interviews and journal entries, the writer sought to understand how the participating teachers developed their classroom management practice, using the Respect Circle as a reference point. Data collection occurred over a 10-week period from October to December.

The findings of this study demonstrate the multifaceted and complex nature of classroom management. Participants identified relationships with their students as the premier factor in establishing classroom management. Additionally, proaction, professional reflection, adaptability, and consistency figured prominently in the classroom management approaches taken by the participating teachers. Utilizing the experiences and suggestions of the participants as a springboard, the Respect Circle model was revised.

The findings underline areas of concern regarding classroom management and suggest that teachers want a respectful, structured yet flexible model upon which to base their classroom management. Suggestions for teachers, new and experienced; school administrators; and developers of classroom management courses are provided.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the people who made both the journey and the destination of this quest exciting, attainable, and rewarding.

First, thank you Dr. Joe Engemann for your guidance as my advisor. I appreciate the efficient meetings, the superb editing, your sense of humor, your expertise, and your enthusiasm. I believe the path of the graduate student can be bumpy and ambiguous. Because of your outstanding step-by-step assistance and instruction and genuine interest in my success, the experience has been highly rewarding.

Second, with gratitude I recognize the contributions of my committee members Dr. Nancy Fenton and Dr. Zopito Marini. Thank you for taking the time to painstakingly review my work. Not only did your suggestions shape this thesis, but your input and your contagious excitement for learning have enhanced my life. I hope our paths will cross again!

Third, I offer heartfelt thanks to my mother, brothers, sisters, and friends who showed a remarkable ability to believe in me from the beginning when this research was merely an idea. Thank you for giving me the courage to risk, to grow, and to imagine. I cherish our many rich and meaningful conversations about teaching, learning, and living.

And last, I thank the 10 extraordinary teachers featured in this study. Thank you for allowing me into your classrooms. Your honesty and eagerness are inspiring and have opened a new path for me. This thesis is dedicated to you.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In this qualitative case study, the researcher explored the experiences of teachers as they implemented a classroom management model called the Respect Circle. The focus of the investigation was upon the ways in which teachers interacted with their students, addressed student misbehavior, and how they implemented and reflected upon classroom management strategies while utilizing the Respect Circle. The purpose of the Respect Circle, a classroom management tool previously designed by the researcher, is to provide teachers with a classroom management approach that is based upon building constructive relationships and establishing a proactive, positive classroom learning environment.

For this study, a qualitative approach was utilized. Creswell (2005) explains that qualitative research is the approach of choice when exploring a process or problem to obtain a deep understanding. In qualitative research, broad questions are asked, data consist largely of the views of the participants, and the participants shape the themes and direction of the research. By exploring the experiences and views of the participants in this study, based on interviews with teachers and their personal reflections, insight was gained regarding both classroom management from the perspective of the teachers and how the Respect Circle affected the teachers' classroom management practices.

The term *classroom management* represents a focal point in this investigation. For the purposes of this study, classroom management will refer to the broad range of teacher decisions and actions related to the facilitation of classroom activities including instruction, relationship-building and interaction, and the use of classroom space and resources.

Background of the Problem

I remember this as clear as day. I remember they [kindergarten students] all came in, said goodbye to their parents, and they were all sitting on the carpet in front of me and just looking at me, and I remember thinking, *now what?* (Amanda Miller, transcript excerpt from a focus group of new teachers, 2008)

Undoubtedly, many teachers can relate to the scene painted by Amanda. The uncertainty and trepidation experienced by new teachers as they launch their fledgling careers is not unexpected, nor is it undocumented. In an article entitled “Why New Teachers Cry” (2004), researchers McCann and Johannessen outline the wide-ranging issues faced by novice teachers. McCann and Johannessen categorize the issues into five sectors, including relationships (with classroom management as a subcategory), workload and time management, knowledge of subject areas and curricula, evaluation and grading, and the development of autonomy. Alternatively, researchers (Wildman, Magliaro, Niles, & Niles, 1992), investigating the roles of mentors providing support for beginning teachers, identify five domains of new teacher concern. The domains include: getting students to co-operate, instruction, administrative tasks, parents, and the school working environment. No matter how researchers categorize the tasks and responsibilities, new teachers are confronted by an extensive array of challenges.

When researchers ask new teachers to rank their most pressing challenges, classroom management consistently dominates the list of concerns. Simon Veenman, in his seminal research from 1984, drew attention to this matter. After reviewing 83 studies that investigated the needs of beginning teachers, classroom discipline was ranked by new teachers as the most seriously perceived problem area (Veenman). Interestingly,

Veenman also reported that the findings from the classroom management studies of the 1960s and 1970s corresponded directly with the literature since the 1930s. The implication is clear—classroom management is a problematic and persistent issue.

Recent research verifies the enduring nature of the classroom management quandary. Teachers spend between 30% to 80% of their time addressing classroom management issues (Levin, Nolan, Kerr, & Elliot, 2009). According to researchers for the Ontario College of Teachers (2008), first-year teachers give classroom management the highest priority when asked to suggest areas for greater focus in preservice teacher education programs. Both beginning and experienced teachers consider classroom management a chief source of concern (Diamond, 1992; Goyette, Dore, & Dion, 2000; Morris-Rothchild & Brassard, 2006). Of interest are data from a current Novice Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) affiliated with a Texas university. New teachers provided feedback for future seminar topics by writing their concerns on slips of paper as they exited workshops. Approximately 1,200 slips were collected. More than 50% of the new teachers' concerns revolved around classroom management (Johnston, Rice, Edgington, & Williams, 2005). New teachers desire and require guidance regarding classroom management.

Context of the Study

The challenge of classroom management is indisputable and, for me, personal. My interest in classroom management was triggered through experience. My first year as a teacher proved to be idyllic. I was employed full-time in a small school as the kindergarten teacher. My students were caring, studious, and curious. I had access to interesting curricula and found great delight in teaching my eager young charges.

Classroom management occurred quite naturally, with little effort. I felt I had discovered a treasure—a career I loved.

My school and teaching assignment changed the following year. I moved to a large, urban, multicultural school. Within 2 months I was willing to renounce my career choice. I wept each day driving to school, during my planning time (hidden away in the audiovisual storage room), and on my return trip home. My grade 2 class was out of control. The children swore, spat, screamed, and frequently expressed their hatred of school in general and of their teacher in particular. I was unable to complete lessons, spending most of the day attempting to bring a semblance of order to the class. I felt ashamed of my ineffectiveness and shocked at how quickly my dream job became my worst nightmare. I limped (along with my students) to June.

During the lowest point of my experience during that grueling year, I vowed that I would never again find myself unable to shepherd my class. I familiarized myself with numerous classroom management programs, realigned my teaching philosophy (this time informed by real life), and began the process of reshaping my teaching practice, highly cognizant of the importance of classroom management.

That was 14 years ago. My interest in classroom management has grown steadily, as has my concern for teachers, particularly new teachers struggling to manage their classrooms. It is my experience and observation that there is a unique teacher pain that arises from classroom management distress. The pain appears to be a raw combination of humiliation, fear, anxiety, disenchantment, and demoralization. This pain can kill the love of teaching.

In 2006, my interest in classroom management was further galvanized. The staff of our junior kindergarten to grade 6 southwestern Ontario public school elected to implement a classroom management plan that a colleague and I developed. The plan outlined how to create a positive classroom culture and how to ameliorate student misbehavior in a respectful, consistent manner. The decision to embark upon this school-wide initiative was the result of our staff's growing concern regarding classroom management issues. Increased acts of student defiance, disrespect, bullying, inattentiveness, aggression, decreased effort, and negative attitudes were some of the concerns raised as teachers sought to understand their students. Teachers felt torn between attending to classroom management issues and teaching the curricula.

As our staff implemented the model, two significant observations emerged. It became evident that a proactive approach regarding classroom management served both the teacher and the student well and that the classroom management plan (eventually called the Respect Circle), with its specific steps and strategies, could be helpful in assisting new teachers.

It is the challenge faced by new teachers concerning classroom management and the potential application of the Respect Circle as a means by which new teachers might be supported that formed the driving force behind the initiation and implementation of this present investigation.

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

For every teacher, classroom management is a significant, if not chief, concern. Teachers, particularly new teachers, require support, understanding, and practical

classroom management tools to assist in establishing positive learning environments. Without support, teachers are left to struggle with what can be an unbearable challenge.

Previous research indicates how the stress of classroom management affects teachers. Hammond Stoughton (2005) highlights the difficult position in which new teachers find themselves as they seek to appear in control of student behavior. She writes,

Beginning teachers understand that a large part of the evaluation of their effectiveness will depend on how well they are perceived to be able to control behavior in their classes and yet there is a deep apprehension about their ability as inexperienced educators to perform successfully in this complex area. (p. 1026)

Not surprisingly, school administrators are also concerned. According to an opinion survey completed by 242 American principals, the most commonly perceived causes of teacher ineffectiveness concerned classroom management skills, lesson-implementation skills, and inability to establish rapport with students (Torff & Sessions, 2005).

Politicians and the public are also engaged in this issue. McNally, I'anson, Whewell, and Wilson (2005), reporting from the United Kingdom, contend that parental and public concern regarding new teachers and classroom management (in particular, classroom behavior) is a serious and legitimate point of contention. In Scotland, the management of student behavior is a national priority, entailing the recent appointment of behavior co-ordinators in schools. The Scottish government is mobilizing funds and resources in an attempt to address the concerns of classroom management.

Scrutiny from parents, politicians, and administrators, combined with constant pressure to perform, place significant strain upon new teachers. Not surprisingly, research

indicates that managing a wide range of nonacademic behavioral needs is associated with increased stress levels in teachers (Greene, Beszterczey, Katzenstein, Park, & Goring, 2002).

The potential for stress and teacher burnout is linked to new teacher attrition. Various researchers report that the rising attrition rates for new teachers are related to the multitude of behavioral issues in today's classrooms (Malmgren, Trezek, & Paul, 2005; Obenchain & Taylor, 2005). In Canada, 20% to 30% of new teachers leave the profession within 3 years (Ontario College of Teachers, 2003). Based on data from recent American national surveys concerning teacher supply, demand, quality, and shortages, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found between 40% and 50% of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years. When investigating the causes of attrition, it was discovered that, while teachers cite poor salary as the main reason for leaving their jobs, close to 50% of new teachers report that classroom management issues (including student discipline and poor student motivation) are linked to their resignations. Similarly, in other research involving new teachers in urban schools, 50% of the teachers studied left the classroom within the first 3 years (Berry, Hopkins-Thompson, & Hoke, cited in Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007).

While research regarding teachers has addressed, in part, the stressors of classroom management, the preponderance of research has focused upon instructional techniques (i.e., how to present information) and increasing subject matter knowledge (Borko & Putman cited in Martin, 2004). Research regarding the amelioration of classroom management difficulties has received less attention. Interestingly, Johnston et al. (2005) report that "many first-year teachers feel fairly competent in their content areas

and comfortable in instructional techniques. It's classroom management that has them concerned" (p. 29).

Research that leads to sensitive insight regarding classroom management decisions and classroom interaction is also absent. Martin (2004) states that educators lack nuanced understandings of how teachers successfully create positive classroom environments that support learning and positive social interaction. Though curricula now emphasize interaction, problem-solving, and critical thinking, McCaslin and Good (1992) claim that often the classroom management system is incompatible with such goals. If coercion and reward and punishment continue to rule the average classroom, as Kohn (1996) contends, students are denied the ability to think, reflect, and problem solve socially and emotionally. Research looking into the less defined areas of how teacher actions affect student emotions and social interactions, and in turn how these influence classroom management, can be a catalyst for change.

While studies show that early attention to classroom management and effective intervention are critical in creating a positive learning environment (Emmer, Everston, & Anderson, 1980), the information is not enough. A new teacher may be well aware of the importance of the first month of school regarding the establishment of effective classroom management but lack the tools with which to build a positive start. An encouraging finding from the work of Emmer, Sandford, Clements, and Martin (1982) outlines that with minimal instruction and time (for example, two half-day workshops) teachers can significantly improve their classroom management skills. Research which leads to the examination and development of classroom management tools, instruction, and support can add to the body of helpful strategies for new teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how 10 teachers experienced a classroom management model called the Respect Circle as they implemented it in their classrooms in one southwestern Ontario school district. The investigation focused upon how the teachers developed and implemented routines, procedures, and classroom rules at the beginning of the school year; how the teachers interacted with their pupils; and how the teachers addressed student misbehavior. Two in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant early in the school year and 6-8 weeks later. The teachers also wrote reflective journals during October and November, noting their decisions, actions, reactions, and thoughts surrounding classroom management and their use of the Respect Circle. The data generated from interviews and journal entries were coded and analyzed according to Creswell's (2005) process. Common themes emerged from the exploration of the teachers' experiences. The findings from this study provide insight regarding classroom management. In particular, the study illuminated the ways in which the Respect Circle affected the teachers and their teaching practices as they established classroom management.

Research Question

Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991), when describing the principles of qualitative study, explain that a researcher typically seeks to understand the nature of social action. To do this, a researcher studies the experiences of people. With this in mind and in an effort to fulfill the purpose of the study, the following question guided the research: What are the experiences of teachers as they implement the classroom management model called the Respect Circle?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study highlighted the experiences of teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle. However, various limitations were considered. For example, each participant was affected by gender, age, personality traits, conflict management style, prior teaching experience, teacher training, attitudes and teaching philosophy, the age and number of students in his or her class, the spectrum of student need, and the degree of support by colleagues, administration, and students' parents.

With this variance in mind, it is possible that a different selection of participants would yield different findings. The study represented the experiences and opinions of the 10 participants and not those of all teachers. Additionally, all of the participants were employed by the same large district school board located within southwestern Ontario. Studying and comparing participants from more rural or larger inner-city school boards in various provinces might have provided a more generalized view of how teachers experience the Respect Circle in the broader Canadian context.

A further limitation was time. The study represents only the beginning stages (i.e., September, October, November, and December) of establishing classroom management. A yearlong study would yield deeper, richer data concerning the Respect Circle. However, time constraints prevented the pursuit of a more extensive approach.

Last, because of my direct involvement during interviews and in the creation of the classroom management model being studied, my lens or bias was carefully considered. Creswell (2005) recognizes bias and defines qualitative research as inquiry that is conducted in a "subjective, biased manner" (p. 56). With this in mind, I assumed a critical stance toward the perspectives I brought to the research during the collection of

data and subsequent analysis. I recognized that my preknowledge and conceptualization of classroom management provided the foundation for this research, and I consciously used my background as an entry point. The research was further propelled by reflection and persistent critical analysis of where my bias, experience, and new understandings interacted and intersected.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two presents relevant literature pertaining to the topic of classroom management and the development of the Respect Circle. The review of the literature encompasses four areas. First, the multifaceted nature of classroom management is demonstrated through an exploration of classroom management definitions, including a synthesis of definitions represented in an overall model. Next, to gain an understanding of how the study of classroom management has evolved, an historical overview is presented, highlighting the forefathers of classroom management. Third, to acquaint the reader with present day research, current models of classroom management approaches are examined and critiqued. To conclude Chapter Two, the model of the Respect Circle and the theoretical framework that formed the foundation of this classroom management tool are presented.

Chapter Three delineates the research methodology that was utilized to collect and analyze data for this study. This includes a review of the case study as a research method and outlines how the case study design served the purposes of this research. The selection of participants, the instrumentation development, and data collection and analysis are presented, ensuring validity and reliability of the study. The personal profiles of each of the teachers interviewed in this study are included in this chapter to introduce

the reader to the participants. The methodological limitations of the research are presented and highlight the concerns considered in conducting this study. The chapter concludes with a restatement of the research problem.

Chapter Four presents the findings gleaned from the collected data. The themes and corresponding subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews and journals are discussed. The themes are organized into six categories: relationships, proaction, changes in teaching practice, facing challenges, customizing the Respect Circle, and scrutinizing the Respect Circle.

Chapter Five summarizes the study and offers a discussion of the findings. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the methodology and results of the research. The chapter proceeds with a discussion tying research and the results together. Implications for teaching practice and theory are presented. Suggestions for further research bring the chapter to a close.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter Two delves into the relevant literature surrounding classroom management. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first portion looks into the permutations of the definitions of classroom management as presented by a wide range of researchers. To represent the classroom management definitions, I have created a model that synthesizes the information into a model. To gain a deeper understanding of classroom management, the chapter next explores an historical overview highlighting the groundbreaking work of six researchers from the early 20th century. This provides a foundation for understanding the roots of classroom management as a topic for study. The third section highlights the work of current educational researchers and outlines a variety of classroom management approaches that are utilized in our schools today. Last, a visual model of the Respect Circle and the theoretical framework and research behind its development are offered.

Defining Classroom Management

A look at past classroom management literature reveals an intriguing evolution of the definition. In the 1960s, classroom management revolved around the concept of teacher control or discipline (La Mancusa, 1966; McKenna, 1974; Smith, 1970). In the 1970s, Kounin (1970) continued the connection between classroom management and discipline both in the title of his book, *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms*, and in his research that highlighted how teachers can manage their classrooms by efficiently monitoring and preventing student misbehavior.

Brown (1971) pushed the parameters of the meaning of classroom management. He moved beyond the view that classroom management solely concerned student

behavior or discipline. Brown introduced the idea that the maintenance of a positive classroom climate, conducive to academic and personal wellbeing, was also a component of classroom management.

This shift to expand the definition of classroom management to include more than discipline and control continued in the 1980s. Charles (1983) referred to classroom management as “what teachers identify as their greatest concerns, matters such as discipline, time pressure, effectiveness – and working with parents” (p. 1). In Charles’s 1995 second edition entitled *Elementary Classroom Management*, he updated his approach to classroom management by adding the following elements: environmental factors, well-organized and efficient instruction, good communication, consideration, and dedication to learning (p. xi).

Recent research corroborates a more encompassing definition of classroom management. Boynton and Boynton (2005) assert that classroom management consists of four components: positive teacher-student relations, clearly defined parameters of acceptable student behavior, monitoring skills, and consequences. Evertson, Emmer, and Worsham (2003) include the Boyntons’ aspects of classroom management and add planning and conducting instruction and effective communication in their inventory of components. Toterhi Ritter and Hancock (2007) define classroom management as managing the classroom activities including learning, social interaction, and student behavior. Johnston et al. (2005) see curricular preparation and behavior management as interwoven components of classroom management.

While managing student behavior continues to figure prominently in the current definitions of classroom management mentioned, the emphasis has shifted from simply

Classroom Management Defined

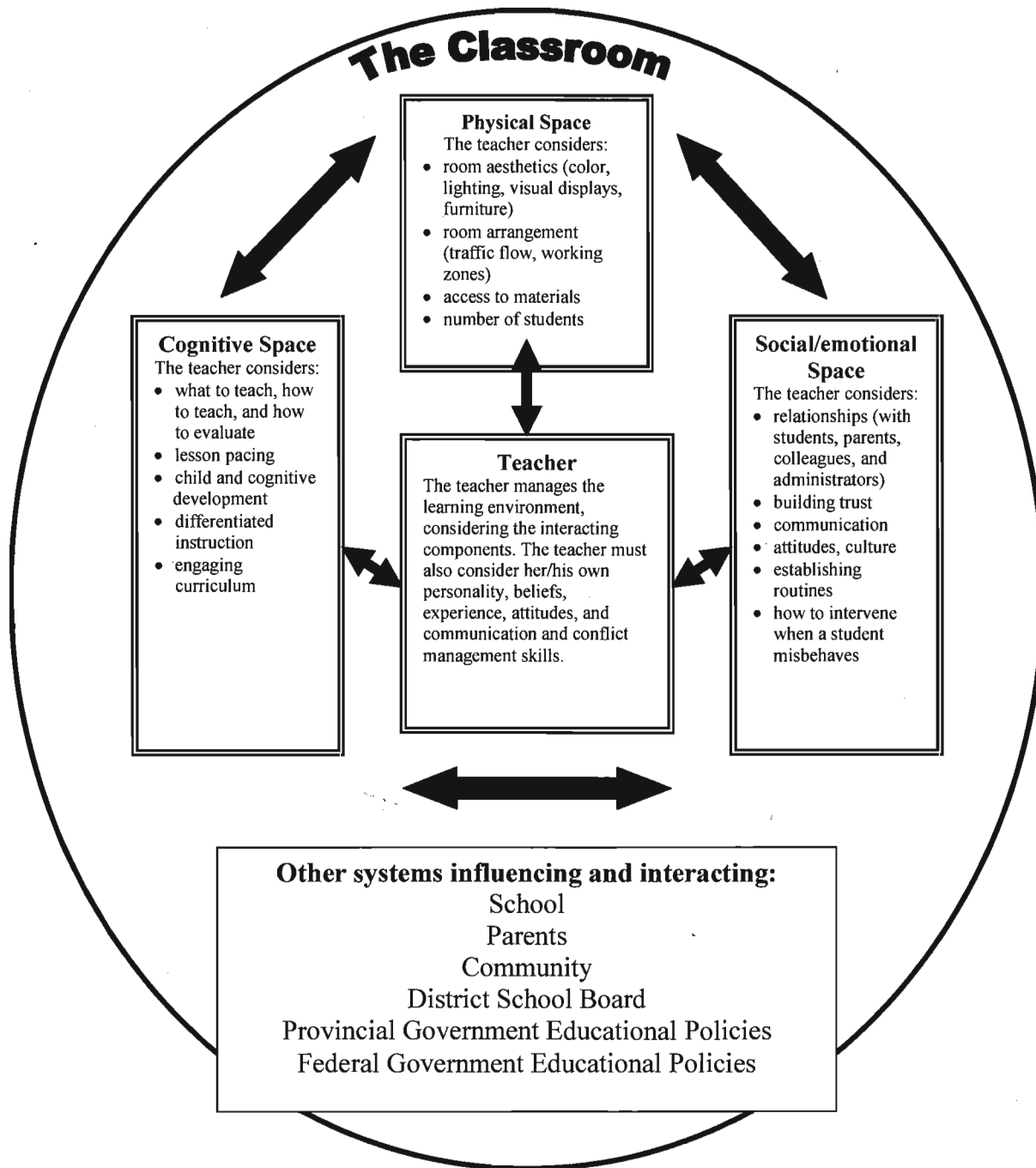


Figure 1. A model depicting a synthesis of current classroom management definitions.

The sector names are drawn from a multitude of authors (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Everston et al., 2003; Johnston et al., 2005; Martin, 2004; Totherhi Ritter & Hancock, 2007.) The concept of the model borrows from Senge's (1990) systems theory.

graphic organizers), curriculum design (e.g., identifying and adjusting content), and classroom management. Similarly, after studying 60,000 grade 4 to 6 students in Texas, Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) found that “more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor” (p. 63). The teacher is the fulcrum in the classroom.

The teacher also brings a plethora of traits and skills that influence classroom management. These include the teacher’s beliefs regarding student academic achievement (Hoy, Hoy, & Kurz, 2008), communication skills (Brown, 2005), conflict management style (Morris-Rothchild & Brassard, 2007), experience level, (Toterhi Ritter & Hancock, 2004), gender, age, personality, and attitudes (Veenman, 1984). Ideally, the teacher, as a reflective practitioner, will reflect upon what he or she brings to the classroom, developing strengths and working on weaknesses.

In his or her role as leader and facilitator the teacher considers the three surrounding sectors or spaces that represent the diverse activities involved in classroom management. The double arrows connecting the teacher to the three sectors illustrate the interrelated nature of the components of classroom management.

Each space also affects and interacts with the others. The physical space pertains to the more tangible aspects of classroom management. This includes the room arrangement, aesthetics, and the number of students. The social-emotional space concerns the relationships that occur within the classroom. How the teacher establishes routines and classroom rules, how the teacher influences and monitors social interaction and relationships, and how the teacher intervenes when students misbehave play a part in

classroom management. The third sector, the cognitive space, encompasses the instructional decisions regarding curriculum selection, delivery, and evaluation.

The sectors are sized similarly. However, during certain times of the year, one or more sectors may dominate. For instance, before school begins, the physical space is carefully considered; as the school year commences and relationships are forged, the social-emotional sector takes precedence; during school-wide or standardized testing, the cognitive sector may stand out. While adjustments might be made, mindfulness of all three sectors throughout the entire year is important.

Other systems that affect the dynamic life of the classroom and in turn influence classroom management include the school (its administrators and school-wide behavior code), the parents and community (as a voice on the school council), the district school board (with its policies and teaching and learning focuses), and provincial and federal educational policies.

The four sectors were used as a foundation to build a definition. For the purposes of this study, classroom management refers to the broad range of teacher decisions and actions related to the facilitation of classroom activities including instruction, relationship-building and interaction, and the use of classroom space and resources. The focus of this study is upon the relationship-building and interaction sector.

Historical Overview of Classroom Management Research

With a definition in hand, it is hoped that the complex and intricate nature of classroom management will begin to unfurl. To further elucidate the topic, this section includes an exploration of the contributions of influential researchers involved in the study of classroom management. As Charles (2005) points out, before the influence of

these pioneers, classroom discipline was based upon a punitive, harsh, and often coercive belief system. Fear and resentment for the teacher and misuse of teacher power were common occurrences. After World War II, views concerning democracy and society began to shift.

The world shift was also felt in the classroom. Beginning in the 1950s the landscape of the classroom began to change. The changes can be categorized into three salient themes concerning classroom management approaches: behaviorism, lesson efficiency, and humane guidance principles.

In 1951, Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg, researchers in behavioral science, presented a new approach to classroom discipline. This approach supported unprecedented and humane educational precepts: teachers need to recognize that individual behavior is affected by group dynamics; by attending to the causes of student misbehavior, teachers can avert problems; aversive tactics must be replaced by gentle and relationship-focused approaches; and students should be involved with decision making regarding discipline. For the first time, teachers were directed to take a more sensitive approach to teaching. Interestingly, this humane and far-seeing method did not become popular. Teachers found the approach unwieldy and were unable to put the tenets into practice (Scarpaci, 2007).

Behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner's research concerning human behavior had a much more profound and lasting effect upon classroom management. In the 1960s, Skinner's behavior modification theories moved from the laboratory and entered the world of the classroom. Skinner believed that to expedite learning, the environment must be carefully arranged (Scarpaci, 2007). He also asserted that every behavior is learned

and that positive reinforcement is the most powerful motivator. His approach was easy to apply, created speedy (though perhaps temporary) results, and could be employed for all ages. Echoes of Skinner's work reverberate in current classroom management techniques and are testament to the success and popularity of his model. Approaches like *catch 'em being good*, token economies, and contracting contain elements of the reward and punishment integral to behavior modification.

But not all educators were sold on Skinner's approach (Charles, 2005). While using positive reinforcement might teach students what to do, it did not teach what *not* to do. Also, the bribery and rat-like training made teachers uncomfortable. In Kohn's (1996) opinion, giving rewards or reinforcers for compliance smacked of manipulation, dehumanized the student, and created a never-ending carrot and stick scenario. To Kohn, there is a dark side to behaviorism.

Borrowing from Skinner's cold cause and effect behaviorism, Jacob Kounin, an educational psychologist, provided the educational sector with a new classroom management theme—lesson efficiency. Kounin's (1970) research highlighted the detailed investigations and observations of teachers in action. He identified key strategies used by effective teachers to manage their classrooms. They included: with-it-ness (knowing what is happening at all times), overlapping (ability to handle multiple events and disruptions), smoothness and momentum (using effective pacing and transitions), and group alerting and accountability (encouraging active participation).

This research marked a slight shift in focus. Rather than concentrating on reactive teaching responses (i.e., punishing or rewarding certain student behavior), Kounin (1970) promoted proactive management strategies (i.e., predicting and preventing student

misbehavior). Additionally, Kounin viewed successful teaching as the ability to keep students engaged through effective, rigorous lesson planning. This model allowed the teacher to stress learning instead of discipline (Scarpaci, 2007).

Though this approach sounds positive, teachers discovered some missing pieces. Kounin did not provide strategies to deal with student misbehavior. Prevention was one step, but teachers wanted help in dealing with inevitable disruptions. As a result, Kounin's efficient lesson management model did not prove to be the total package teachers desired (Charles, 2005).

Furthermore, some educators took issue with Kounin's teacher-centered tactics. Kohn (1996) asserts that the strict teacher control of monitoring and directing negated the role of students. McCaslin and Good (1992) express concern regarding the emotional cost of lesson efficiency. By applying a system of management to each student in a similar fashion, though conflict and disruptions may be quelled, individual needs are not recognized. McCaslin and Good suggest that rules and structures must be adjusted, allowing students to gradually assume more responsibility for self-control. This is particularly significant as the students age. In their words, "Preventive classroom management must move from concern with proximal goals of reduction of disobedience to more distal goals of self-regulation" (p. 14).

Rising to meet the need for a more caring and student-centered classroom, another researcher highlighted the importance of communication in the classroom and helped to usher in a new wave of humane classroom management. In the 1970s, psychologist Haim Ginott developed a model of classroom management based on self-respect, self-discipline, and positive interaction (Ginott, 1971; Scarpaci, 2007). He coined the term

congruent communication, involving the acceptance of students' feelings and the avoidance of blame, shame, or intimidation. He also promoted student independence and the facilitation of personal problem solving. Ginott believed that positive communication led to student self-respect, which in turn led to improved classroom behavior.

It would be difficult to argue against Ginott's compassionate approach to teaching, yet there was some criticism. Though teachers certainly wanted to be humane, at the same time they wanted disruptions and misbehavior to be quickly defused (Charles, 2005). Ginott did not claim his method could reap immediate rewards nor instantly extinguish misbehavior. His system emphasized communication and a positive student-teacher relationship. Ginott's model, comprised of a long and cumbersome list of dos and don'ts, and offering little guidance regarding managing misbehavior, was not embraced as a complete classroom management system (Scarpaci, 2007). Similar to Redl and Wattenberg's 1950s ideal, Ginott's humane model faded before it flourished.

Around the time that Kounin's and Ginott's models appeared, another approach to classroom management was added to the mix. In the late 1970s, Rudolf Dreikurs, a psychiatrist, based his management model upon democratic principles and touched on several models. He believed that students and teachers work together to create their classrooms. If a student misbehaves, it is the result of unmet needs. Dreikurs felt that a student's need for recognition and a sense of belonging could lead to (a) attention getting, (b) power seeking, (c) revenge seeking, or (d) displaying of inadequacy (Charles, 2005).

Logical consequences also played a role in his model. Dreikurs instructed teachers to assist students in setting goals and rules and also formulating consequences. The offering of praise, which Dreikurs believed would create student dependency upon the

teacher's reactions, was eschewed in favor of *encouragement*, where comments were directed at what the student did, not the character of the student (Charles, 2005).

Wholehearted acceptance of Dreikurs's model was not forthcoming. Teachers struggled with connecting democracy with logical consequences. Also, they found it difficult to determine student needs and motives (Charles, 2005; Scarpaci, 2007). In a more scathing reproach, Kohn (1996) sees Dreikurs's logical consequences as a continuation of traditional punitive models, "repackaged punishment" (p. 40) and "Punishment Lite" (p. 42). The old/new reward and punishment of behaviorism was blended with democracy to add a humanistic twist.

True to the nature of cycling and recycling ideology, one final pioneer in classroom management is considered. In the 1970s, clinical psychologist Thomas Gordon popularized Parent Effectiveness Training (PET). This program taught parents how to establish positive relationships with their children. Following on the heels of this success, Gordon developed the teacher effectiveness training (TET) program. His books and workshops provided teachers with strategies for improving interpersonal communication skills and problem solving. The strategies include active listening, using I-messages, and seeking no-lose solutions to conflicts. The approach encourages self-reflection, promotes self-control, eliminates reward and punishment, and promotes collaborative classroom management. Gordon's model was a humanistic, guidance, and relationship-based approach (Scarpaci, 2007).

However, with behaviorism firmly embedded in the psyches of many teachers, Gordon's approach was difficult to employ. The shift in power from teacher control to a shared community was a stretch. Moreover, TET is a preventive model founded on

guidance principles. This requires empathy and excellent communication skills. Not every teacher is adept in these areas (Scarpaci, 2007).

To summarize, the past leaders in classroom management theory and model development provided a wide range of building blocks. From behaviorism and lesson efficiency to humane, democratic, and guidance principles, the foundations of our present classroom management systems were laid. Past ideology continues to influence research and practice today. The next section explores this connection and examines current classroom management models.

Current Classroom Management Models

The influences of past classroom management approaches serve to shape the models of today. To better understand the current classroom management landscape, two dominating classroom management themes are considered. First, the consequence model will be presented. With its behaviorist and result-oriented approach, it represents a teacher-centered theme common in today's classroom. Following the consequence model is the guidance method. Here communication, relationships, and collaboration are prominent. The guidance model represents a student-centered theme.

The Teacher-Centered Classroom

In the late 1970s Lee and Marlene Canter promoted a classroom management system based upon a consequence approach called Assertive Discipline. According to the Canthers:

Underlying the Assertive Discipline approach is the following take-charge attitude: The teacher is the boss in the classroom. No student has the right to stop

a teacher from teaching or another student from learning. (Canter & Canter, 1984, introduction)

In this model, teachers predetermine classroom rules and insist that students follow them. The most important classroom rule is “Follow directions” (Charles, 2005, p. 42). Specific negative consequences (warnings with names written on the blackboard, time-out, detentions, calling home) are employed for noncompliance. Appropriate behavior is rewarded and reinforced with individual or class recognition, including verbal praise, free time, marbles in a jar (a certain number can lead to a class party), and extra credit. Students are taught how to behave in all settings by modeling and practicing responsible behavior. The Canthers contend that by combining personal concern for students with predictable structure based on defined limits, a secure and peaceful environment is created.

Although Assertive Discipline is widely used in schools today (Kohn, 1996), there is concern regarding the model. Curwin and Mendler (1988), educators and creators of the current classroom management model called Discipline with Dignity, state that the simplicity and ease of implementation of the Canter model has a negative side effect. They assert that when obedience is the chief goal, punishment becomes the main intervention. Self-discipline is sacrificed for the sake of expediency. Additionally, the lockstep approach for dealing with misbehavior allows no room for teacher discretion, student individuality, or the consideration of underlying causes of misbehavior (e.g., emotional distress, poverty, divorce). With nonnegotiable rules, students may feel resentful and disempowered.

Lee Canter (1988), in a rebuttal article, refutes Curwin and Mendler's contentions. Canter cites 17 studies that, according to Canter, provide proof of the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline. He lists findings by a variety of authors that show reduced inappropriate student behavior, continued improvements in pupil behavior, increased on-task behavior, and improvements in teacher and pupil self-concept. Canter states "this program is working because it is fair, it is proven, and it does not hurt children" (Canter, p. 73). Kohn (1996) devotes a significant portion of his book explaining how in his opinion Assertive Discipline is unfair, ineffective, and damaging to students.

Assertive Discipline represents one of the various and common classroom management models based upon consequences. Reward and punishment, clear and predetermined classroom rules, firm teacher control, and behavior modification represent the precepts of a consequence approach (Scarpaci, 2007). The practical and definitive steps to controlling misbehavior offered by the consequence model can bolster teacher confidence and provide teachers with the concrete assistance they desire. These approaches occur in a teacher-centered classroom.

However, some educators reject current teacher-centered approaches as punitive, inequitable reincarnations of behaviorism. Favored is a more humanistic, relational model that includes student choice and self-responsibility. In models supporting this approach, communication, positive teacher-student interaction, student involvement, and cooperation are promoted. These approaches create a student-centered classroom.

The Student-Centered Classroom

A classroom management model that represents a humanistic or guidance approach is Curwin and Mendler's (1988) Discipline with Dignity program. This

program includes strategies for maximizing hope, student dignity, and ways to interact effectively with students who disrupt instruction. Curwin and Mendler assert that students who chronically break school rules are trying to gain some measure of control over a system that has damaged their sense of dignity. By encouraging students to become involved with the learning process, developing classroom rules together, and providing interesting and worthwhile course material that attends to various learning styles, Curwin and Mendler believe hope can be restored. They claim that their approach has a 40% success rate with students with high behavior needs (Scarpaci, 2007, p. 119).

As with Discipline with Dignity, most student-centered models view misbehavior as a manifestation of unmet needs (Albert, 1996; Glasser, 1998). However, some critics do not accept the simple and direct link between misbehavior and unmet needs. The concept that children choose to misbehave belies the reality that some children may lack the emotional and cognitive sophistication to control all impulses and to make rational decisions (Kohn, 1996; Scarpaci, 2007). In addition, as with Glasser's model, teachers are instructed to take time with misbehaving students, asking the students to verbalize their needs (i.e., "What do you want right now?").

There are concerns with the implementation of the guidance approach. For instance, expecting all students to understand and be capable of expressing their unmet needs may prove to be unrealistic. Deep needs may often be hidden and impossible for a child to decipher and explain.

Further to this, expecting all teachers to be comfortable with the role of a guidance counselor is idealistic. Not every teacher has been trained in the art of

communicating as a counselor, in recognizing issues, drawing out the concerns of the students, and assisting the students in dealing with emotional or family matters.

Not only do guidance models add pressure for teachers to be counselors, but there is also added pressure to be curricular authorities. Several educators (Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Glasser, 1998; Kohn, 1996) contend that all curricula must be evaluated. The teacher must ask: Does this meet the needs of the students? Is it useful, meaningful, and enjoyable? Does it encourage deep learning rather than superficial knowledge? According to supporters of guidance models, boring and irrelevant curricula are a recipe for student misbehavior. However, the pressure upon teachers to appraise mandatory curricula, possibly revising or ignoring policy, could be overwhelming and impossible for some teachers.

When comparing the broad themes of teacher-centered or student-centered classroom management approaches, it appears that perhaps there is no panacea for classroom management. The consequence teacher-centered models like Canter's offer straightforward and easily implemented programs. Yet, the prescriptive, externally oriented models can strip away teacher intuition and student self-respect and autonomy. The more student-centered guidance approach, like that of Curwin and Mendler, offers compassion, communication, and relationship-building as keystones. However, not all teachers are able to navigate the nebulous waters of imprecise directives that lack quick fixes. Canter highlights the theoretical clash. Commenting upon the more abstract nature of Curwin and Mendler's approach, Canter states, "Theories such as those of Curwin and Mendler make interesting reading, but teachers don't need more educational literature. They need answers, and they need them now" (Canter, 1988, p. 73).

Interestingly, Canter's comment harkens back to the historical perspective offered earlier in this chapter. The past shows that the benevolent and visionary approaches to classroom management were not widely embraced. Teachers required practical, realistic, and fast-acting advice. But the sustainability of Canter's quick and prescribed solutions is questionable. The long-term costs to the short-term benefits of obedience and reward and punishment must be considered (Kohn, 1998).

Perhaps the answer to effective classroom management lies somewhere in the middle of the theoretical continuum—combining the humanitarian principles of the guidance approach with achievable, practical, and caring ways of dealing with student misbehavior.

Theoretical Framework of the Respect Circle

The Respect Circle attempts to find the balance between structure and sensitivity, between a teacher-centered classroom and a student-centered one. This study began with the Respect Circle, a framework of classroom management (see Figure 2) and a model influenced by the work and theories of numerous educators. An earlier study concerning the needs of new teachers and classroom management that I conducted (Hutson, 2008) served to solidify the Respect Circle model and formed the precursor to the present research. The remaining section elucidates the theory behind the development and functioning of the Respect Circle.

Piaget (cited in O'Toole, 2008) stated that intelligence is knowing what to do when we do not know what to do. New teachers are bombarded with uncharted territory, often facing the unknown. Educational text books, theories, and university courses may assist in preparing new teachers, but it is not until new teachers are faced with their own

THE RESPECT CIRCLE

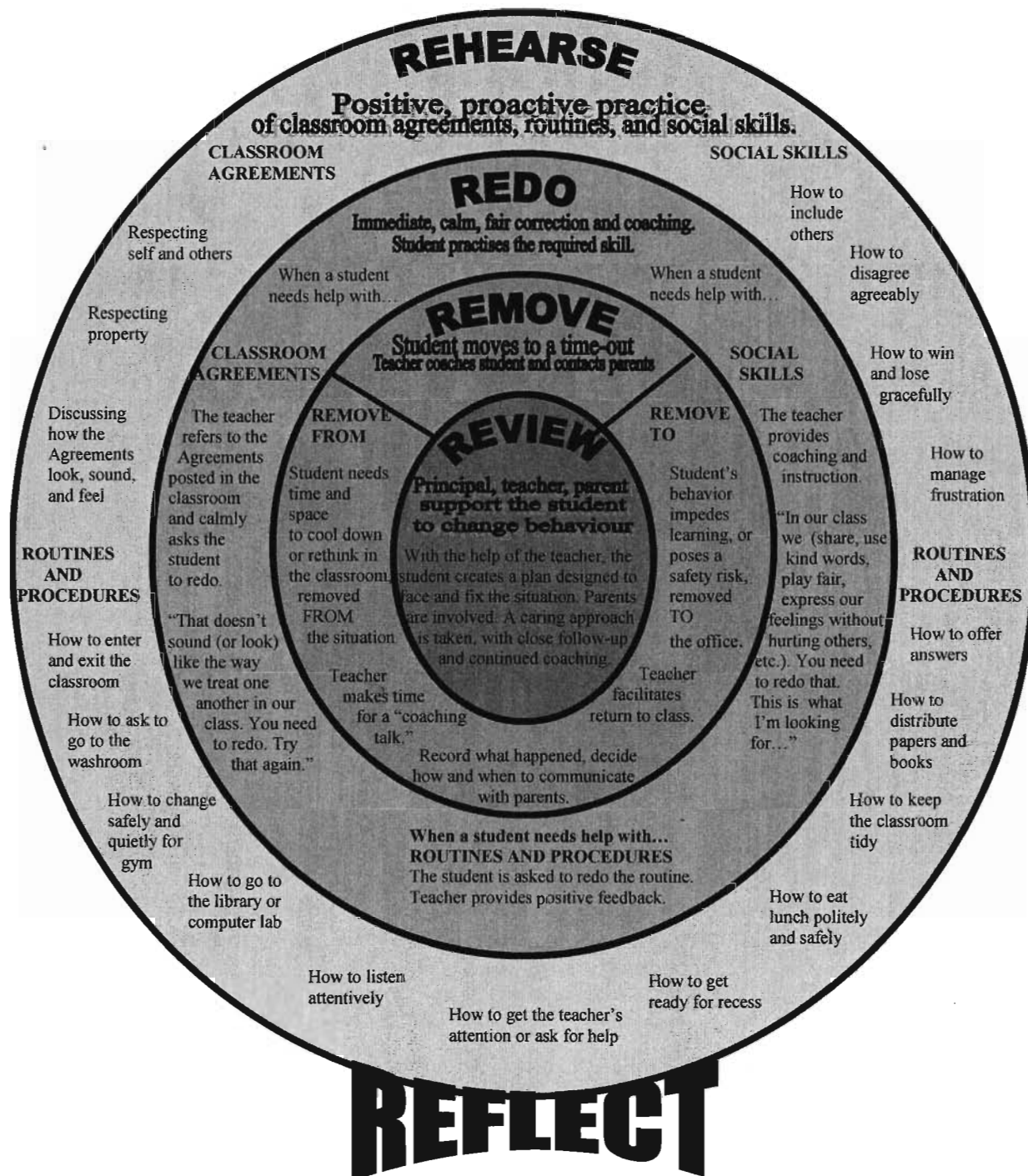


Figure 2. The respect circle: A classroom management model.

classes that the complexities and realities of classroom management truly hit home.

Veenman (1984) identifies the first stages of teaching by employing the term *reality shock*. He sees this time as a “collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life” (p. 143).

To support new teachers as they negotiate the reality shock inherent in their new positions, assistance is essential. A framework designed to broaden and strengthen their repertoires in responding to classroom management concerns can be of assistance.

Overview of the Respect Circle

Teaching tips, models, and educational philosophy abound. While models regarding professional development and reflection such as Schön’s (1987) can be instructive, their abstract nature may not meet the needs of new teachers who are searching for practical and immediate answers, often in the midst of a minicrisis. Alternatively, books like *Getting the Buggers to Behave* (Cowley, 2006) and *Teacher-Tested Classroom Management Strategies* (Nissman, 2006) are bursting with practical suggestions and sensible guidance. Yet their simplistic, one-problem-per-page format undermines a holistic, insightful approach to classroom management that is conducive to continuity and meaningful connection. The Respect Circle visually represents a model that attempts to merge theory with down-to-earth practicality.

The Respect Circle model is designed to visually display a classroom management approach that facilitates the creation of a caring, positive classroom culture. Mutual respect, coaching, and relationship-building are the underlying principles. Structure is seen in the concentric circles which reflect teacher interaction and

intervention. Embedded throughout the structure is the principle that the development of a positive social-emotional classroom climate is crucial.

O'Toole (2008) spotlights the layers of classroom management. She stresses that learning is no longer solely about teaching intellectual skills but must also include emotional and social aspects. She lists perseverance, curiosity, self-knowledge, and collaboration as requisites for lifelong learning. Establishing a positive social and emotional setting conducive to learning is the responsibility and challenge of the teacher. It is also the aim of the Respect Circle.

O'Toole (2008), referring to classroom environments, also notes the interrelationship of the relational domain and structure. She maintains that structure can support the creation of a positive learning environment. However, structure is not the sole answer. She writes:

The distinction is between setting a formula for how the proper environment can be established (and managed and measured) and engaging in an ongoing learning process that involves all the learners in the class—students and teachers. (p. 81)

The importance of social-emotional interaction linked with structure is examined in other research. Walker (2008) transferred parenting-style research into classroom contexts. She studied how an authoritative style of teaching (high demandingness and high responsive to student needs), an authoritarian style (high demandingness and low responsiveness), and a permissive style (low demandingness and high-moderate responsiveness) affects student outcomes. She found that an authoritative teaching style (firm, but warm and caring) optimizes student engagement and learning by promoting student autonomy and setting the scene for effective classroom management.

The words *firm, but warm and caring* convey the heart of the Respect Circle. Structure is provided by the specific steps. But the importance of teacher-student (and student-student) interaction is also recognized. The Respect Circle is designed to assist new teachers in balancing teacher power with collaboration and connection.

To gain an understanding of the inner workings of the Respect Circle, a closer look inside each circle will be of assistance.

The Rehearse Circle

The largest and outermost ring is called rehearse. This refers to the proactive component of the model. The literature is clear that proaction, preparation, and preplanning are the cornerstones of positive classroom management (Charles, 2005; Johnston et al., 2005). Everston et al. (2003) underline the importance of teacher planning before the year begins, including organizing the classroom and supplies, the early establishment of effective classroom routines, and the maintenance of standards. Boynton and Boynton (2005) draw attention to the need for teachers to take time early in the year to teach and reinforce clearly defined parameters regarding procedures. It is not enough that teachers announce the expectations, but rather they must also practice (or rehearse) them with their students.

Proaction applies not only to careful and thoughtful preplanning of the classroom space and procedures but also to the way in which relationships will be built. Brown (2005) exhorts teachers to consider the impact of the first day of school and how communication influences tone and, ultimately, classroom management. Genuine interest, concern, and respect can be conveyed through facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and comments that spring from the teacher. These teacher cues inform

each student's decision as to whether or not to engage in a mutually respectful relationship.

Applying the rehearse element of the Respect Circle entails several key components. These include the teacher (a) considers classroom tone and how to build positive, caring relationships from the first day of school, (b) considers classroom procedures and the accompanying task analyses, then models and practices the procedures with students in a positive, coaching manner, (c) collaborates with students in creating classroom rules or agreements, and (d) models and practices social skills (e.g., how to handle frustration, how to cope with stress, how to disagree agreeably). Setting a positive, relationship-focused, and structured foundation the first few weeks of school lays the groundwork for effective classroom management.

The Redo Circle

Nevertheless, even with a sound foundation of teaching, modeling, and rehearsing, some students may have difficulty in the first several weeks of school. This is where the second circle comes into play—the redo circle. This circle is designed to support and coach students as they go about their days putting into practice the routines and parameters for social interaction that they, their teacher, and fellow classmates have developed.

Martin (2004) conducted a study concerning the everyday functioning of classrooms and new teachers. After closely following three new teachers (who had attended the same teacher education program), Martin found that only two out of the three teachers were able to establish effective classroom management. Her findings

suggest that four classroom management conceptions contribute to classroom management efficacy:

1. A sense of authority and responsibility for social interactions in the classroom.
2. Explicit teaching of social skills.
3. The use of task analysis (i.e., breaking down tasks and then teaching the tasks).
4. The ability, as a teacher, to self-manage emotions and responses.

The redo component, with the rehearse element as a foundation, addresses all four classroom management conceptions. The following scenario illustrates this point.

Keeping in mind the high standards established during the rehearse stage, the teacher takes his or her authority seriously and sensitively assists students who have forgotten or overlooked classroom standards. For instance, if a student enters a room noisily, disrupting the class, the teacher calmly says, “Remember how we practiced how to respectfully and quietly enter a room? You need to redo that.” The student tries it again. The teacher gives immediate feedback to the student upon the completion of the redo (e.g., a thumbs up and a smile) and then continues with the lesson or activity. The redo component outlines a strategy that new teachers can use to teach and maintain consistent, caring standards of interaction by sensitively asserting teacher authority while providing quick and quiet correction.

Interestingly, the teacher in Martin’s study (2004) who was unable to establish effective classroom management based her management philosophy, in part, upon Kohn’s (1996) book *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community*. Kohn’s humanistic and caring approach, which encourages student-centered learning and the

development of a respectful and collaborative classroom community, informs some of the tenets of the Respect Circle. However, though Kohn warns about the abuse of teacher power, he does not provide strategies to deal with student misbehavior or suggest ways in which teachers can firmly and respectfully hold students accountable. Since students come to school with a wide spectrum of social and emotional competencies, some students may need many redo experiences each day. The key is that the teacher remains calm, upholds consistency and fairness, and shows a firm and caring approach.

The Remove Circle

Basic rehearsal and gentle redos may not work for all of the students all of the time. Some students will require more assistance. The students in these instances may have become frustrated or angry. Reflective teachers at this stage (this is difficult as a new teacher!) will consider factors that may have triggered the student's emotionality. Perhaps the curricular task is too difficult or too easy. Perhaps the student is tired, hungry, hot, afraid, or bullied. Often a student, when exhibiting strong emotions, will benefit from some time to calm down. This is called the remove.

Though, on the surface, the remove may appear like a traditional timeout, there are essential differences. Integral to this component is the coaching element. Levin et al. (2009), while presenting strategies to intervene during chronic classroom management issues, stress the importance of "private conversations" (p. 217) with students. These talks are intended to provide time to discuss the issues faced by the student, to find ways to help the student, and to strengthen the relationship. I agree with this intervention and add to it. If the teacher views each student misbehavior as a teaching opportunity to teach about life, coping, caring, and conflicting fairly, the teacher can also use the private

conversations as a time to coach the student regarding social skills. The term *coaching* is defined by John Hopkins University researcher Saundra Murray Nettles (1992). She states:

Coaching is instruction that places the responsibility for learning in the learner and fosters the development of skill through vigorous use of teaching practices, provision of continuous feedback on performance in settings designed for practice or display of mastery, and provision of companionship and other forms of social support. (p. 3)

By incorporating Nettles's definition of coaching and focusing quiet teacher-student talks upon connection and social skill instruction, the tenor of the timeout loses its past punitive connotation and becomes an opportunity for problem solving and relationship-building. For the purposes of this study, private conversations during redos and removes are called "coaching talks."

The remove circle is divided into two segments: remove from and remove to. Both sectors involve a calming period and a coaching talk. After the student has spent some time, either in a quiet spot in the classroom (e.g., a reading corner or a specified quiet area) or removed from outside play by walking and talking with the recess teacher, or at the office, the teacher initiates a quiet discussion. The discussion is a time to debrief the incident (what happened) and a time to teach coping skills and conflict management. Boynton and Boynton (2005) highlight the importance of correcting in a private location, remaining calm and caring, and treating students with dignity.

If the student has been removed to the office, it is crucial that the student's reentry is facilitated by the teacher. This may require a student-teacher talk and some form of

reparation. Again, a kind and concerned approach by the teacher is essential. As the student enters the classroom, the teacher models respect and the importance and strength of community, that mistakes are made, that restitution can be facilitated, and forgiveness is forthcoming. The teacher privately records the incident in a behavior log. This enables the tracking of patterns, providing insight, and also fulfills the legal responsibilities of the teacher in tracking difficulties. To honor and nurture the parent-school connection, the teacher also decides how and when to communicate concerns with the student's parents.

The Review Circle

Students with exceptionalities may require additional intervention and support. The review circle is employed at this stage. Adelman (2002) estimates that between 12 and 22% of all children are described as suffering from a diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder. Boynton and Boynton (2005) believe approximately 5% of students arrive at school with specific emotional and behavioral issues that originate from their home lives and/or from disorders. Another 15% of the students may exhibit behavioral issues as the result of ineffective classroom management. Curwin and Mendler (cited in Boynton & Boynton) describe an 80-15-5 principle, meaning that 80% of students rarely break the rules, 15% of students occasionally break the rules, and 5% of students often break the rules. The Association of School Counselors in the United States (Dunn & Baker, 2002) claims that 18% of students have special needs that require intervention and resources that are beyond the typical classroom. It is this 5-18% of students who may require the support provided by the review circle.

If a student is demonstrating repeated difficulties, the teacher (especially a new teacher) will need to call upon other resources and support people. The teacher will

update the principal regarding the concerns (here the behavior log will be of assistance). The school principal and teacher may consider making a referral for assistance from behavioral resource personnel. To support the team approach, the student and his or her parents are also involved in the planning of interventions. The goal is to support the student as he or she moves forward and together develop a plan of action that facilitates respect for self and others.

Several researchers' work dovetails with the review process in the Respect Circle. Graham (2007), in addressing the needs of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) diagnoses, presses educators to resist judgment and discrimination and instead advocates a humanistic approach. She suggests: (a) acknowledging that a particular student requires redirection more than other students, (b) making adjustments to their teaching programs, and (c) advocating at the school and board level for adequate resources to support the class teacher. Students with exceptionalities will need calm and caring redirection (redos and removes with coaching) and the added assistance of a team. The team can assist in providing suggestions regarding program modifications and resources.

The Respect Circle in Summary

There is a limited understanding of how teachers, particularly new teachers, develop (or do not develop) the complex framework of interaction that is the underpinning of any classroom management practice. Certainly research bears out that proaction, firm and caring consistency, and consideration of the social and emotional development of students and teachers contribute to positive learning environments. Moreover, the connectivity of respectful relationships integral to the Respect Circle,

uniting and strengthening the framework from within, serves as the core of effective classroom management.

Endnote

This review was undertaken to provide an exploration of pertinent classroom management literature. First, classroom management definitions were considered. Past and present definitions were synthesized by the researcher to create a model. The model illustrates the multifactorial and interactive nature of classroom management. Next, a travel back in time laid the foundation as groundbreaking work in the study of classroom management was examined. The historical perspective revealed the controversial and cyclical range of classroom management approaches. The backward glance set the scene for the new and reinvented present-day models. The investigation of today's teacher-centered and student-centered classroom management models highlighted main approaches currently used in classrooms. The critiques drew attention to the contention and complexity surrounding classroom management. Last, with definitions and research laid out, the Respect Circle and its theoretical framework were presented.

By combining the complexity of classroom management with the intense need of new teachers to understand and master this domain, the necessity for continued research is clear. Furthermore, although it has been demonstrated that literature concerning classroom management is available, there is an absence of approaches that provide a visual schema and meld a teacher-centered classroom management model with a student-centered one. In this study, I sought to explore the experiences of teachers as they implemented one such model.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, the experiences of teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle were explored. Examining the experiences of people yields complex and nuanced findings. To understand the subtlety and intricacy involved in human interaction, a qualitative research approach was chosen. Creswell (1998) refers to qualitative research as “an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material” (p. 13). The framework of a loom is compared to the framework of qualitative research. By designing a framework for this research that included instrumentation design, data collection and recording methods, data processing and analysis, and attention to validity, reliability, and limitations, a complex and holistic picture of teachers and classroom management was woven. The inquiry procedure of case study, with its focus on in-depth exploration of individuals and activities, was used to investigate the experiences of teachers and their interpretation and implementation of the Respect Circle in their classrooms.

Research Methodology

The selection of collective case study as a methodological means through which the research question might be addressed resulted from an investigation of case study form and focus. Creswell (1998) defines case study as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). “Bounded” refers to a case that is separated out for research. This can entail the study of a program, event, activity, or individuals during a certain time period and in a certain place. A collective case study refers to research in which a multitude of cases are described and compared to

provide insight into an issue (Creswell, 2005). Multiple sources of information can include observations, interviews, audio-visual material, documents, and reports. The in-depth, multifaceted features of case studies are corroborated by other researchers (Feagin et al., 1991).

The goals of a qualitative collective case study were consistent with the goals of this research. In fact, the case study methodology brings with it a variety of advantages that dovetailed well with this study. Feagin et al. (1991) explain how the case study provides a fullness and depth to the description and analysis of the microevents involved in larger social structures in natural settings. The close examination of teachers' experiences while interpreting and using the Respect Circle in classrooms provided significant data regarding how theory (i.e., the Respect Circle) and experience interfaced. The multiple sources of information (for this study: interviews and journal entries) that are integral to the case study permitted a more holistic view of complex social interactions between teachers as they interacted with their students and how the teachers perceived their interactions as reflected in their journals. Rossman and Rallis (1998) explain that the description generated from case study can depict how the passage of time has shaped circumstances. As social action unfolded in the classrooms during the first term of school, the experiences and growth of teachers regarding classroom management were captured as the case study framework was applied.

However, there are drawbacks to the case study method. Time was an issue. The beauty of case study over time is the potential of seeing change. The limited time in this study of one school term curtailed some of the richness and scope that might have unfolded if the teachers' experiences over an entire school year were examined.

Also, case study, by its nature, can contain contextual embeddedness. The cases were limited to one context: a southwestern Ontario public school board, lacking social diversity. The study was deep but narrowly focused.

Case study is also characterized by emergent design. The participants and the findings serve to drive the research. The journey is not hard and fast, resulting in possible deviation and research design alterations. Consequently, the researcher and the research design must be flexible and able to respond to discovery and surprises along the way.

Site and Participants

One of the stepping stones that paved the way for this research was the selection of the site and participants. The participants for this study were drawn from one large southwestern Ontario public school board. The following is an outline of the participant selection process.

After speaking at a large meeting of teachers newly contracted to the board, I invited teachers to participate in a classroom management study. The teachers filled out an information sheet indicating years of teaching experience, current teaching assignment, age range, gender, and the location of their jobs. Using Veenman's (1984) criteria for what constitutes a new teacher in terms of years teaching, I planned to select volunteers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. Seven new teachers volunteered.

However, 3 experienced teachers also volunteered. Each of the 3 experienced teachers had recently changed either division (e.g., moving from secondary to junior/intermediate) or made a significant job switch. The experienced teachers brought a wealth of insight regarding classroom management and, because they were new to their

positions, were similar to the new teacher participants as they struggled with unknown territory and learning curves. To broaden the representation of teaching positions to include high school and to add one male teacher, the experienced teachers were included in the research. Other than 2 teachers who worked at the same school, but who volunteered independently of each other, all teachers were unknown to each other and taught at different schools.

The following section outlines a brief profile of each teacher, describing his or her years of teaching experience and current teaching position. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants, and any identifying information has been changed to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. An overview of the participants' profiles is provided in Table 1.

Kelly

Kelly is presently in her third year of teaching. Her school is located in a small southwestern Ontario town. Kelly's teaching responsibilities are broad, including teaching grade 3 half-time. To complete her full-time position, she teaches grade 1 and 2 French Immersion and gym to other primary classes.

Debbie

Debbie is presently in her second year of teaching. Her junior kindergarten to grade 8 school is located in a southwestern Ontario city. Debbie's full-time assignment is teaching both English and French to a combined class of grades 3 and 4.

Emily

Emily is in her first year of teaching. She teaches French to the grade 7 and 8 classes in a junior kindergarten to grade 8 school. The school is located in a midsized city. Emily travels to each classroom, taking her resources with her on a movable cart.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Participants	Gender	Age	Years teaching experience	Teaching position
Kelly	F	25-29	3	Grade 3 half-time, kindergarten, grade 1
Debbie	F	21-24	2	Grade 3 and 4 French Immersion, full-time
Emily	F	21-24	1	Grade 7 and 8 core French
Daniela	F	25-29	3	Grade 7 and 8 art, grade 7 homeroom
Wendy	F	30-34	1	Grade 7 and 8 math, English, history
Zoe	F	21-24	1	Grade 7 and 8 core French
Nicole	F	35-40	2	Primary and junior special education, coverage during planning time
Steve	M	30-34	Over 7	Grade 7, full-time
Natalie	F	Over 40	Over 20	Secondary ESL
Cathleen	F	Over 40	Over 20	Secondary, teaches students who previously attended rural parochial elementary schools, supervises student work in placements in the community

Please note all names are pseudonyms

Daniela

Daniela teaches at a midsized intermediate school. She teaches art to grade 7 and 8 students as well as language and history to grade 7. Daniela has taught 3 years, first as a junior teacher and now at the intermediate level.

Wendy

Wendy teaches at an urban, midsized intermediate school. She teaches grade 7 and 8 students. Her teaching focuses include math, English, and history. This is Wendy's first year of teaching.

Zoe

Zoe teaches at a large, urban junior kindergarten to grade 8 school. This is her first year of teaching. Zoe teaches French to the grade 7 and 8 students. Zoe moves to each classroom, taking her resources with her. To round off her full-time position, she also teaches physical education.

Nicole

Nicole recently returned to university and obtained her Bachelor of Education degree. Previously, Nicole received a Master's degree and worked in the community for a number of years. Now in her second year of teaching, Nicole's assignment includes delivering Special Education to the primary and junior students in her urban school. She also covers a variety of classes during the planning times of the homeroom teachers.

Steve

After teaching at the secondary level, Steve recently moved to the elementary division. Steve taught junior students for several years and this year is an intermediate

teacher at a large school in a small town. His current position entails teaching grade 7 core, including language and mathematics. He also teaches physical education.

Natalie

Natalie was employed as a high school English teacher, principal, and teacher trainer in an Eastern European country over the course of 19 years. She moved to Canada a number of years ago. In Ontario, Natalie taught adult education. This is her third year teaching in a large public high school. In her current full-time position, Natalie teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

Cathleen

Cathleen is in her third year in a teaching position in a high school that partners with a rural community in the area. Because the rural parochial schools do not grant Ontario Secondary School Diplomas, Cathleen's local high school provides specialized instruction for grades 9 to 12. Part of a team of teachers, Cathleen is responsible for providing all compulsory credits and some electives. She also supervises the students during their co-operative work experiences in the community.

Instrumentation

True to case study design, multiple sources of information were employed in this study. Instrumentation included two types of interviews and participant journal entries. Creswell (1998) refers to the use of multiple and different data sources as a form of triangulation. Triangulation adds validity to a study by offering a variety of perspectives. The remaining section provides a description of the theory behind the selection and development of this study's instrumentation.

To guide the decisions surrounding the development of the interview as an instrument in this study, the work of several researchers was considered. One of the initial needs of the study was to teach the principles of the Respect Circle to the participants and to begin to formulate possible questions for subsequent interviews. A focus group was of service. Rossman and Rallis (1998) explain that, during focus groups, the researcher establishes an open environment that allows for information to be discussed and questions raised. The focus group, held the first week of October, provided an opportunity for the participants to gather together and hear a common message regarding the elements of the Respect Circle. To solidify understanding, several classroom management scenarios were discussed as a large group. As the researcher, I assessed the depth of understanding by observing how the participants responded to the scenarios. Concerns and questions were addressed during the focus group interview. Time was also given to participants directly following the meeting for further clarification or explanation. During the focus group interview, preliminary follow-up questions emerged and were eventually used for the next round of interviews. The focus group protocol is provided (see Appendix A).

A second type of interview was also used. While a focus group was helpful in sharing information and formulating questions, this study was also concerned with investigating the experiences of individual teachers as they implemented a classroom management model. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that a one-on-one interview assists in eliciting personal and individual experiences as a study unfolds. With this in mind, each participant was interviewed twice during the study: an initial interview in early

October 2008 and a follow-up interview in late November, 2008. Both interviews were audiotaped and approximately 30-45 minutes in duration.

The interview format was semistructured. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that a semistructured interview format is most effective if specific information is required. Since information regarding how teachers experienced using the Respect Circle was sought, Rubin and Rubin's semistructured interview guidelines were followed. The main questions were predetermined and designed to cover the overall subject of classroom management and the experiences of the teachers, each question flowed from one to the next and connected to the purpose of the research. Additionally, Creswell (2005) describes semistructured interviews as interviews in which "the researcher asks some questions that are closed ended and some that are open ended" (p. 598). To allow for discovery and flexibility, the interview questions began with an open-ended approach, exploring the topic of classroom management in general (e.g., "Tell me what classroom management means to you."). Also included in the interviews were more specific questions (e.g., "Do you have any examples of using the Respect Circle strategies?").

Steps were taken to validate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the one-on-one interview protocols. Prior to the interviews, I met with a small group of experts in the field of education. During this meeting possible interview questions were discussed. Suggestions were offered, and adjustments to the interview protocols were made. The interview protocols are provided (see Appendixes B and C).

Another data collecting instrument included journal entries. Creswell (1998) mentions the use of journal entries as a valid and popular form of data collection in case

studies. In this case, the journals acted as a source of observations, thoughts, and concerns as the teachers managed their classrooms and implemented the Respect Circle.

Several factors arose in considering journaling as a data collection instrument. Instructions regarding the journaling needed to be clear and concise. Also, each participant's level of comfort with journaling was considered and respected. To ease the workload of recording notes regarding the implementation of the Respect Circle, two simple journal protocols were offered. For quick jot notes, the Respect Circle was altered, leaving space within each circle to make notes. Alternatively, or in addition, participants could choose to record notes using a more traditional prose format, making use of the writing prompts. They were also encouraged to use email if that proved convenient to them. Journals and instructions were provided to all participants during the focus group. I collected the journals either electronically or during interviews.

Data Collection and Recording

Before beginning the data collection and recording portion of the study, an application to the Brock University's Research Ethics Board for an ethical review of the study was submitted. Upon clearance of the study (see Appendix D), an application was also submitted to the district school board requesting permission to conduct research within the board at the elementary and secondary levels. District school board approval was granted.

Once the 10 participants were selected, an invitation to attend the focus group was extended. A package, including an outline of the Respect Circle and a consent form, was delivered to the participants' schools. At the commencement of the focus group, an opportunity to ask questions regarding the consent form was provided. The consent forms

were collected, the focus group continued, and data collection began. During the focus group, the Respect Circle tenets were presented, with time for interaction and questions. Concerns were noted, and appointments were made for one-on-one interview times.

Each participant was interviewed twice for an average of 30-45 minutes. They were asked the questions on the protocol, with latitude for probes or follow-up questions (Rossman & Rallis, 1998).

After the one-on-one interviews, I transcribed the audiotapes. To ensure precision, I listened to the tapes several times. Upon completion of the transcripts, each interview was also reviewed in its entirety as I checked for a word-to-word match. Additionally, all transcripts were sent to the participants to verify the accuracy, thus activating the member check process. An opportunity to make corrections or additions to the transcripts was given to the participants. These measures were intended to lend credibility to the findings.

Data Processing and Analysis

Rossman and Rallis (1998) use a metaphor to assist in the understanding of data processing and analysis. They paint a picture of a closet bursting with clothes. Data analysis is the sorting, categorizing, grouping, and regrouping of the “clothes” or data in ways that are meaningful, valuable, and justifiable. To begin the process of sorting, Creswell (1998) recommends reading through all the collected information to obtain an overall sense of the data. In accordance with Creswell’s guidance, I carefully read the materials, paying attention to possible connections, similarities, and variances. I filled the margins of the transcriptions and journals with notes.

To move along the data processing, thematic data analysis was undertaken. Creswell (2005) describes thematic data analysis as the distilling of essential features of data and making an interpretation of people and activities. This involves developing themes. While reading the data again, the research question was applied to thematic analysis: What themes emerge from interview transcripts and journal entries concerning the experiences of new teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle?

Feagin et al. (1991) discuss the development of themes. They explain that the richness and subtlety of human experiences that are uncovered during qualitative case study prohibit strict categorization. Instead, flexibility is crucial. Creswell (1998) concurs and suggests that an initial inductive approach be taken, with open coding, beginning with detailed observations and moving toward more abstract ideas. In this way, the categories arise from the data.

To assist in coding and categorizing the data, a combination of Creswell's (2005) hand analysis of qualitative data process and a spreadsheet program were utilized. Creswell describes coding as the process of segmenting and labeling text to create descriptions and broad themes. Using hard copies of the research transcripts, each segment of text was assigned a code word or phrase that represented the meaning of the text.

After an entire text was coded, a list of the code words was created for each individual transcript. Similar or redundant codes were consolidated, reducing the number of codes to approximately 20. To ensure that the preliminary coding was accurate and appropriate, specific quotes that supported the codes were highlighted. Some codes were added or eliminated at this stage.

The next step of analysis involved further reduction of the codes and the formulation of themes. Creswell (2005) describes themes as similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea. By identifying the most frequent, unique, or surprising codes from all the texts, and by grouping related key words or clusters of ideas together, six themes emerged (see Table 2)

Limitations

This study explored the experiences of teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle. Although all stages of the study were carefully considered, some methodological limitations existed. One of the limitations involved the bias of the researcher. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005) recognize built-in bias when they refer to the role of case study researchers. They state, "The researchers themselves are the primary 'measuring instruments,' relying heavily on personal observation, empathy, intuition, judgment, and other psychological processes" (p. 314). As the creator of the Respect Circle, I brought hopes and expectations regarding the effectiveness of the model. As a teacher, I also brought my experiences and preconceived ideas as a classroom manager. In acknowledging the bias and using it as a cue for self-reflection and critical analysis of responses, actions, and methodological decisions, I consciously and carefully used bias as a tool rather than a trap. I was also careful to take a receptive stance rather than a defensive one. I invited the suggestions of the participants and welcomed their input.

A second limitation of this study involved the small sample size. The participants represented a small homogeneous group (drawn from one school district, and White, middle-class teachers). Only 1 male teacher participated, creating a preponderance of

Table 2

Overview of Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Relationships	Getting to know the students Building respect and rapport
Proaction	Outlining expectations Task analysis Reflection
Changes in Teaching Practice	Becoming firmer and calmer Adjusting teaching strategies
Facing Challenges	Consistency Time constraints Dealing with exceptional students New teacher challenges
Customizing the Respect Circle	Adjusting to the needs of the class Adding classroom management strategies Extending the model
Scrutinizing the Respect Circle	Strengths Weaknesses New ideas

female experiences and opinions. With a larger, more diverse ethnocultural participant group, the results of this study might have varied.

Time was also a limiting factor. Although the data were collected during the first term of school, the most critical time of the year regarding the establishment of classroom management (Emmer et al., 1980), a yearlong study would have yielded richer data.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Within the framework of qualitative study, a unique challenge regarding the establishment of trustworthiness arises. Feagin et al. (1991) compare the terms reliability and credibility. Good reliability means that the same outcomes can be achieved if different researchers use the same research instrument. Typically, quantitative methods are considered more capable of providing reliable results than qualitative studies. However, with the ability of qualitative data to reflect honest and nuanced responses, qualitative research is considered to have greater credibility (p. 241).

With this in mind, a variety of actions were taken to establish validity in this study. For instance, triangulation was provided by presenting a “matrix” of information (Creswell, 1998, p. 123). The information included the collection and distillation of an initial focus group interview, followed by one-on-one interviews (two per participant), and numerous reflective journal entries from the participants. The accumulated data provided a rich and varied source of perspectives. Additionally, to allow the voices of the participants to speak for themselves, numerous quotes were provided in the analysis section. Furthermore, member check processes were used. Rossman and Rallis (1998) state that by sharing interpretations of the emergent findings with participants, the truth

value of a project can be enhanced. This contributed to accuracy, thoroughness, and integrity.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate how new teachers experience the implementation of a classroom management model called the Respect Circle. To address the research question and knit the qualitative research together, case study was undertaken. Data were collected over a 2-month period, including interviews and journal entries provided by the participants.

It is hoped that the findings from this qualitative case study have woven a picture that can promote understanding regarding how teachers approach classroom management, interpret, and implement the Respect Circle. The findings, analysis, and implications are presented in Chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings garnered from the examination of the experiences of teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle. One focus group interview, two in-depth interviews with each teacher, and their journal entries, chronicling their journey through the first term of the school year, provide the data. The data in this qualitative study were examined utilizing content analysis. The prevailing themes regarding classroom management that emerged as a result of the analysis are described in this chapter. Also included are quotes from the participants, providing the reader with a glimpse into the challenging and rewarding worlds of 10 teachers grappling with classroom management concerns.

Findings

As the analysis of the data unfolded, six prevalent themes concerning classroom management arose. The themes, which present the insights, perspectives, and classroom management experiences of the participating teachers, include: relationships, proaction, changes in teaching practice, facing challenges, customizing the Respect Circle, and scrutinizing the Respect Circle (see Table 2).

Relationships

In interviews with the participants and woven throughout their journal entries, a prevailing topic of concern became highly evident. To the participating teachers, classroom management was inextricably linked to relationships with students. The issues regarding student relationships encompassed two main areas: (a) getting to know the students and (b) building respect and rapport.

All of the participants approached the process of getting to know the students with intentionality and care. For Natalie, working with high school ESL students, familiarizing herself with her class and establishing positive relationships began the moment her students approached her classroom in September. As the students entered the room, they found a colorful welcome sign on the door. Inside, each desk was bedecked with a student's name and an individualized welcome note. To foster inclusion and to get to know one another, beginning activities the first day of school included working in small groups to discover how the students were similar and a name game, where students selected adjectives that characterized their names and personalities.

This same attention to detail in getting to know the students was echoed in other classrooms. Emily, a rotating grade 7 and 8 French teacher, stated her priority in September was quickly learning the names of her students, all 200 of them! In her second interview in November, when asked what made the largest difference in improving classroom management, she stated, "Getting to know the kids; getting to know all their names; how they are; how to work with them."

Nicole, Kelly, and Daniela also viewed knowing students as a key to classroom management. Nicole took time to greet students at the door each morning, checking in with them. By understanding her students' needs, including their social and emotional needs, she felt she could better adjust the day to support her students. In the initial interview in October, Kelly talked about how she worked to discover the interests of her grade 3 students (e.g., asking, "What do you do in the summertime? What do you like to do for fun? What really gets you going? Are you arts? Are you music? Are you sports?").

Daniela, an art teacher, spoke about her focus of getting to know her many students and later drawing on their strengths.

While getting to know students figured prominently in the priorities of the participants, building respect and rapport was also a main concern. The participants began to build the foundation of respect on the first day of school. Natalie explained her beliefs regarding respect:

In my teaching philosophy, respect and love for students is very important. I want students to understand that I care for them and at the same time I want to instill in them the desire to have respect with each other. (final interview, November 12)

She also emphasized that respect was reciprocal. She carefully modeled respect in each interaction with her students, whether she quietly praised achievement, privately corrected mistakes, or participated in a class community-building activity.

The concept of mutual respect was also seen in Zoe's approach. She stated that she viewed her role as a partnership with the students. From her perspective, managing a classroom was about maintaining respect and a caring environment.

Daniela had a unique way of looking at relationship- and respect-building. She explained that she intentionally made "positive deposits" in the "emotional bank accounts" of her students. In taking time to develop positive relationships by giving praise, listening to the students' stories, laughing at their jokes, and presenting engaging lessons, she found that when it was necessary to discipline the students, they respectfully accepted the correction. Kelly concurred. When commenting on the respect-management connection, during the initial interview in October she stated, "everything else just kind of falls into place after you have that respect."

Rapport, seen in mutual understanding and a positive teacher-student connection, was also an important element in the classrooms. In writing about rapport, Natalie noted that if rapport is established based on respect and trust, with reinforcement of expectations presented in a positive way, “the other stages of the circle [redo and remove] get easier to implement and with more efficient results” (journal entry, October 3).

Humor was specifically mentioned by 5 teachers as a way of building rapport. Emily, able to speak five languages, explained how she occasionally mispronounced English words with her intermediate French students. By laughing at herself along with her students, she was able to demonstrate her humanness, fallibility, and willingness to relate to her students. Likewise, with her grade 7 and 8 students, Daniela stated, “I have a sense of humor. The classroom is a fun, comfortable place. (journal entry, October 7),

Beyond the sharing of humor, rapport and respect were also built during coaching talks. The coaching talks, part of the Respect Circle, were designed to provide individualized instruction regarding social skills and management of emotions. Laced throughout the participants’ journals were examples of how and why teachers took time to speak with students who were having difficulty with behavior. Some teachers talked quietly to the students in the classroom about the issue at hand and suggested ways of coping; some asked the students to step into the hall or nearby workroom to talk; some teachers devoted lunch time and breaks to meet with students; and some teachers made a point of calling parents to keep them informed of the challenges at school, promoting a team approach.

Interestingly, almost exclusively, the students responded positively to the coaching talks. Perhaps Nicole articulated the key to the positive response. When

discussing the problem of *not* taking time for coaching after a student has been removed from a situation, she stated,

It's so unfair to them [students] because then how do you set them up to do it right the next time? A lot of them forget why they've even been sent [to time-out], and if they don't have the skills to do it the first time, how are they supposed to do it right the second time? (initial interview, October 17)

She also talked about the restorative feature of a coaching talk. By talking one-on-one with the students and giving them a chance to air their feelings, concerns, and grievances, it felt to her as if the teacher-student relationship was "healed." This interaction and careful growing and tending of relationships were prevailing concerns in the classrooms of the participating teachers.

Proaction

Although establishing positive relationships with students was the core concern, a second and equally compelling and common theme surfaced throughout interviews and journal entries. The participants expressed a new or renewed commitment to teaching with proaction as the foundation. Proaction was seen in the teachers' initiation of decisions and actions in anticipation of possible challenges rather than reacting to events after they occurred. The proaction fell into three categories: clearly and deliberately outlining curricular and behavioral expectations, utilizing task analysis (breaking down the anticipated student tasks and ensuring materials and plans were in place), and taking time to reflect and adjust strategies and approaches.

Perhaps the most vividly expressed need for proaction was offered by Cathleen. As a secondary school teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience, though new to

her position working with students from local parochial schools, Cathleen's face lit up when she explained her new approach to teaching. After being asked if the Respect Circle had affected her teaching practice, she stated:

Big time! I think first, act later. Before I was so busy teaching my lesson and I had not taken the time to front-load from the very beginning. The more I went on my journey in the learning circle, the more I realized that that is the most important part. And yet, I didn't spend time at the beginning of the year, I just waited for something to happen; then have a teaching moment. Rather than—this is the teaching moment from the start. You don't have to get to that point if you do the front-loading in the first place, if you have everything in place before you even start. (final interview, November 24)

She went on to illustrate the point with this analogy:

It's like starting to play a game not knowing what the rules are. And that must be what it's like for the students, too. We didn't have any rules that we were sharing, and yet we were both expecting things from each other. Yet we hadn't taken the time to say them. So there's bound to be problems. (final interview, November 24)

Once Cathleen recognized the significant role proaction played in the classroom, she purposefully and carefully set about clearly establishing the expectations for student behavior. She did this jointly with her students. During a class meeting, she introduced the Respect Circle, and together they formulated information sheets about how they would treat one another. This included specific ways to show respect and manage disagreements and frustration. The agreed-upon procedures and routines were posted in

the classroom. With the expectations clear and visible, as Cathleen said, she and her students were now “speaking the same language.”

Taking the time to talk about the school and classroom rules, routines, and procedures was considered a crucial element for all of the participants. Each teacher devoted a certain amount of time the first few weeks to discussing the daily and weekly classroom routines and scheduled activities. Time was also committed to writing classroom contracts and classroom rules or agreements. As in Cathleen’s class, some teachers opted to involve the students in the process of shaping the rules.

The act of involving the students in creating classroom agreements and establishing routines and rules led to some interesting results. For instance, Debbie, in setting clear routines (especially around her grade 3 and 4 daily “morning meetings”), guided the students to a high level of responsibility and accountability. If she needed assistance, she could call on a student to run an activity or act as a helper if a substitute teacher was in for the day.

Wendy also spoke about a form of student involvement and responsibility. After the guidelines and routines were established in her grade 7 and 8 classrooms and a student forgot to follow the procedure (e.g., entering the classroom loudly instead of quietly), with a look from Wendy, the student automatically turned around and “redid” the entry.

This “self-administered” redo was experienced by other teachers. Zoe, teaching in a large school where the Respect Circle has been used for 3 years, explained the phenomenon this way:

It's at the point, even for the new students who have come from other schools, already they know, you don't have to ask for a redo. They know if they need a redo, they just look at you and redo it themselves. Or they'll say, "I need to redo, I'll try that again." (initial interview, October 30)

Steve, a grade 7 teacher, had a similar experience. After taking time during the first week of school to discuss routines and make a classroom contract, designed by students, then framed and posted, Steve discovered continued student involvement. He stated, "The kids that know the routines and they get off the routine, you just see their eyes go, Ruuuuhh! 'Woops, I didn't do that right,' and they'll actually do it themselves" (initial interview, October 21).

A comical recount by Kelly, a primary teacher, also demonstrated the self-administered redo. After spending months teaching her grade 1 students the importance of *not sliding* into each other after the gym warm-up, Kelly explained the actions of a student with a particular penchant for sliding:

And today, there's one little guy, and he's always the one who will do it, and not even intentionally, he just wants to slide. That's his biggest dream. I think he'll be a stealer in baseball! So he comes, and I'm watching him. He's running, and I know that it's going to be a slide. And there's a tiny little slide there at the end. I just look away to see who else is doing it. Next thing I know, he's up and he's gone back to the line and he's walking back [for a redo]. I'm thinking, *I didn't have to say it! I didn't have to say a thing!* (final interview, November 10)

Other teachers highlighted the importance of proaction by not only discussing the rules and procedures with their students but also practicing them. Nicole, in reflecting on

the inclusion of the rehearsal component of the Respect Circle, stated that though she talked about what the students needed to do behaviorally, at first she did not practice it with them. As the term progressed, she realized that, for many students, discussion or posted rules were not enough; the students needed to actually practice the expectations. She compared teaching new academic skills to teaching about behavior. Her teaching pathway for a math activity, for instance, included explanation, demonstration, modeling, and student practice. However, regarding the learning of social skills or routines, Nicole realized she had “just expected” that her students would know how to behave. Nicole began to consciously incorporate time to practice and refine the behavioral expectations with her students.

Highlighting the importance of rehearsing the expectations and routines, Kelly was adamant about her advice to other teachers. She stated,

Caution: Do not go any further until you have this [the rehearse circle] down pat, the expectations of what you want, what you expect from the kids. Don’t go anywhere until you know those things and you have a clear plan. (final interview, November 10)

Zoe had a similar perspective. When asked what she considered to be the most important component of the Respect Circle, Zoe said,

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. It’s just like trying out for a soccer team. You wouldn’t have a kid come out and shoot on net when they’ve never shot the ball before. You would show them how to shoot, shoot, shoot. (final interview, December 16)

In order to practice a task, routine, or procedure with their students, several teachers realized the need for organization and preparation. This included taking time to break the activities into steps and rehearse them in their minds before presenting them to the children. This task analysis undertaken by the teachers represents the second component of proaction. Nicole, working with a variety of grades, described during the initial interview her approach to task analysis by explaining that she needed “a really clear plan” of what she was doing, where she was going, and how she would “move from one [activity] to the other, thinking out the steps.” The task analysis proved particularly valuable when applied to the less-structured times including art, gym, computer time, and transitions from one activity to another.

Kelly also discovered the value of task analysis. She recognized that her students were “not mind readers” and that she needed a clear and organized vision of what she wanted from them. As she said, “You really need to have yourself organized. You really need to know what it is you want out of these kids, because if you don’t know what you want, how are they going to know?” She went on to explain how being organized, understanding the task, and presenting it to the students helped her go “from point A, to point B, to point C.” Soon her lessons “flowed” (final interview, November 10).

Kelly’s thinking first and acting later bridges the third component of proaction: reflection. With proaction and reflection, the participants deliberated over what and how to teach, implemented the lesson or activity, and then took time to consider if or how adjustments could be made. Daniela, new to her assignment of teaching the same art lesson to multiple classes, became systematic in her reflection. She learned to first teach the lesson to the classes in which the students were most responsive and responsible. By

assessing the success of the lesson, she was able to make quick adjustments (like adding more paint stations) by the time the next class entered. She stated during the initial interview in October, "I'm learning every day new things, proactive things. But it's a bit of a rough start because I didn't know all those things beforehand and there wasn't really anybody to tell me them." By using the power of reflection, Daniela was able to grow in a new area and curtail problems with classroom and lesson management before they occurred.

Kelly also used reflection to assist with challenging situations. After having repeated difficulty with a particular student (a student with whom her teaching partner was *not* having difficulty), Kelly was able to step back and say, "OK, really, it's me now. So what is it that I'm doing that just doesn't agree with what he wants?" Kelly utilized the behavior log (a booklet where she recorded dates, times, and challenges with students) to assist in detecting patterns in the student's behavior. With this insight, she was then able to think ahead to potentially challenging situations and put into place strategies that would support the student. Her new goal was "How can I help this student to be successful" (initial interview, October 6)?

Zoe also considered reflection an integral part of her teaching practice. In her final interview in December, she stated, "The reflection piece, I think, is a two-way street. It's not just the student reflecting on their actions but the teacher reflecting on their actions as well." To Zoe, reflection was actually a responsibility.

Interestingly, during the final interview, Cathleen described a prior absence of reflection in her teaching practice and that of her experienced colleagues. She stated, "None of us had ever talked or spent time in our career reflecting and developing

something like this [the Respect Circle].” Cathleen became instrumental in inspiring and creating a new way of approaching classroom management in her department. With excitement and even wonder, she described the change:

It’s a whole new atmosphere of problem solving, and here’s a tool [the Respect Circle], and we’ve got something here. We’re not just sitting here, “Oh what are we going to do?” We’ve actually got a plan and an approach and a common language. (final interview, November 24)

Proaction was seen in the planning, presenting, and rehearsing of expectations and routines. For many participants, reflection naturally flowed from this sequence and became a stepping stone for growth.

Changes in Teaching Practice

One manifestation of growth experienced by all the teachers during the study was reflected in the changes in their teaching practice. The changes were uncovered as the teachers articulated, through interviews or journals, how life in their classrooms in previous years or months compared to how they managed their classrooms by the end of November. Two main areas of change surfaced: (a) the teachers became firmer, calmer, and more confident and (b) the teachers made adjustments in their teaching strategies.

In a poignant recount of transformation, Natalie explained how her job teaching ESL in a large high school initially presented a number of challenges. Two years ago, while new in her position, the negative student attitude and offensive language that occurred in her classroom resulted in calling upon the assistance of the vice principal. She was uncomfortable with this arrangement and wanted to manage the behavior concerns within her classroom. Natalie stated that, though she intuitively knew about the

tenets represented by the Respect Circle, she felt hesitant in this new setting to apply the precepts.

However, in the first term of 2008, with the Respect Circle in hand and a growing sense of empowerment stemming from two previous years of teaching ESL, Natalie became more confident in her ability to manage her classroom. When comparing her past and present managing styles, she illustrated it by saying, "I see two images of myself." She went on to explain her current position.

I am myself, and I give a lot more to my students. Not only from my way of being and my caring, but in terms of knowledge and academic ways. I am more ambitious. (initial interview, October 6)

When asked if her current ambitious approach was tiring, Natalie responded, "on the contrary." She stated that even her husband had noticed that, though she worked long hours, she was not bringing home the stress of past years. Natalie discovered that when her classroom management style and her personal beliefs meshed, she was more energetic, creative, enthusiastic, and empathetic. To Natalie, feeling comfortable and confident in herself and seeing her students happily coming to class (and even enjoying homework!) was like seeing "joy."

That joy was clearly evident while she accompanied me through the long corridors of her high school as we made our way to and from our interviews. Numerous students stopped to say hello to Natalie as we passed; she asked them specific questions revealing a keen interest in her students; the students responded with openness and wide smiles.

Wendy, a first-year teacher, experienced a similar change in her level of confidence. During the focus group interview, she articulated frustration and fatigue as she attempted to reach her high-risk grade 7 and 8 students. She bravely disclosed how she was raising her voice with her students and “acting out of character.” Several weeks later, by the first interview, and after making a variety of changes including implementing the Respect Circle, Wendy reported a significant improvement in her classroom management. She recognized that she had been too lenient, giving her students too much leeway. She became firmer, faster. By upholding the behavioral expectations, management issues decreased. By November, she had found her classroom management stride and she could be herself. As she stated during the initial interview, “I learned that there’s no sense getting all up tight, which really wasn’t me anyways...I’m a lot calmer....And crack a lot of jokes now, and it’s just a lot more relaxing.” By having a firm response plan, Wendy’s confidence increased. By using structure, she became more relaxed.

This increased commitment to a firmer classroom management approach was reflected in the journal entries of all the teachers. Their writing revealed a conscious and careful journey through the structure and steps of the Respect Circle. They recorded how they moved through the circles of rehearse, redo, and remove, documenting the responses of the students and the success of the management strategy. As Emily explained, to her, having the structure of the circles assisted in communicating her expectations, her actions were predictable, and she could approach behavior issues with increased decisiveness and confidence. Cathleen saw learning about the steps of the Respect Circle as a way of

adding to her “tool bag.” She had increased her repertoire of strategies and could now approach management situations with increased confidence and creativity.

Change in teaching practices not only appeared in the increased teacher confidence, firmness, and calmness, it also manifested in the alteration of teaching strategies. Daniela, a teacher for 3 years, and in her first year as the art teacher for a grade 7 and 8 school, spoke of her transition from rookie teacher to experienced teacher.

My first year of teaching, there was a lot of times when I would go straight to the remove [sending students to the office] because I didn't have any other strategies at my disposal. And I felt like a failure. When you're removing the kids from the class and everybody sees that, your colleagues and your administration, they see that, and they look at you and think, “Can't they handle this in their own classroom?” So I learned quickly not to send kids to the office in my first year.

And then maybe it was too far extreme the other way. I had to develop those strategies on how to deal with kids inside the classroom. (final interview, November 28)

As Daniela refined her teaching practice, one managing strategy she learned to use echoes the theme of proaction. She learned that prevention techniques served her well. Interestingly, while procedures and routines were occasionally posted in primary or junior classrooms, Daniela learned that for her there was value in being explicit about simple routines, even for 12- and 13-year-olds. A large poster explaining how to enter and exit her classroom was visible beside the door.

Part of her prevention strategy also included recognizing how to present lessons. She revealed some loss of innocence when speaking about her ideals as a new teacher and the reality of what actually works in classrooms. In her words,

You start out and you have all these great ideas and you want to do them with the kids and they're hands on and they're fun and in groups, and sometimes the structure isn't what it should be. So I think that was something that I struggled with, especially in my first year. I'm better now, but I know there's still room for growth. (final interview, November 28)

Transitioning from idealism to realism and adjusting teaching strategies to correspond to student needs takes insight and courage. Wendy also adjusted her approach, particularly her instructional choices. In her first interview she explained how, after attending a workshop about working with students with special needs, she returned to the classroom with this quote: "It's helpful for all but necessary for some." With this quote in mind, she took extra care in modifying her lessons, incorporating various modes of learning (e.g., providing visual information as well as auditory). As her students found more academic success, behavior concerns decreased.

Conversely, sometimes the adjustments meant less modification. Debbie, a first-year French Immersion teacher explained that her initial approach to some students was very permissive. For example, she modified her program for a certain student, saying "OK, she's a delicate flower." However, she eventually found that by expecting more from her, the student was able to rise to the challenge. The student became more independent and the teacher more confident in her ability to assess and adjust.

Similarly, Nicole, in her second year of teaching, spoke about changing her teaching style. As she understood and incorporated the task analysis that helped her to present a cohesive and thoughtful lesson or activity, she began to place more faith in her ability to assess the needs of the class and meet those needs. As she stated, “It’s really trusting myself to read the class instead of what I feel that I have to get done so that we meet all these [curricular] expectations—which is so pressured” (initial interview, October 17).

As part of reading the class, she also recognized that she needed to “go with the flow.” In reflecting on her transition from last year to this year, she said, “I became less wedded to what I had planned that we were going to do and more trusting, ‘we need to go with the flow here.’”

Not only did Nicole learn to trust herself regarding curricular pacing and timing, she also gave herself permission to take time to coach the students. As part of the Respect Circle, the coaching component encourages teachers to provide instruction regarding behavior and social skills. While Nicole had believed in the importance of coaching, the Respect Circle reinforced her belief and gave her “more courage” to take time for this element.

A touching example of the effectiveness of Nicole’s coaching style became clear during the final interview as she recounted a story concerning a small group of students. The students, each with challenges in processing language, found it difficult to focus and typically annoyed one another during class, making it problematic for Nicole to carry on with the lesson. Using a class meeting format, Nicole presented the problem of disruptions and inattention to the group, asked for help in finding solutions, and role-

played how the students could help themselves and each other when focus issues arose. Nicole, with a beaming smile, explained how the students now supported each other, politely asking for and receiving help. As Nicole said, “That just gives me shivers, because it empowers them with the words to use. And it makes a difference to the whole group.” Nicole adjusted her approach, and the conflict was transformed into compassion.

Facing Challenges

Not all conflicts were so easily addressed. In fact, challenges faced by the teachers emerged as a compelling theme woven throughout conversations and journal entries. The challenges fell into four categories. The teachers struggled with issues of consistency, time constraints, supporting exceptional students, and challenges specific to new teachers.

Although all the teachers set expectations regarding student behavior, promoting and insisting upon the standards proved to be a common challenge. Consistency was described as maintaining standards, following through with consequences, being firm about routines, persevering in the face of difficult conflict, and frequently and steadily using the redo circle.

Interestingly, 3 teachers specifically mentioned how they upheld consistency and utilized the redo element by applying it to both academic and behavioral standards. For example, to Steve, the redo concept harmonized with his learning focus. He posted and emphasized the quote: “If you don’t have time to do it right, you must have time to do it again.” If his grade 7 students handed in assignments that were not up to standard, he asked for a redo. Likewise, if the students exhibited behavior that was inconsistent with the standards, a redo was necessary.

Steve also broadened the discussion about consistency. He mentioned that his first term was going well, especially compared to his experience the previous year. When asked if his September start-up had affected his classroom management, he stated,

Yeah, definitely the way I started this year, much more consistent in terms of the way I delivered my expectations, much more firm in terms of dealing with the expectations, making sure that they understood clearly what they had to do. And lots of redos. Lots of practice. (final interview, November 25)

Though Steve was strong in his commitment to be consistent and attributed his successful classroom management to his ability to set and maintain standards, he added that a fatigue factor came into play. Continually reemphasizing routines, rehearsing, and redoing was tiring.

Kelly, teaching a challenging grade 3 class, also found that to be true. In her final interview in November, she articulated her struggle between maintaining standards and maintaining her energy level. She stated,

It's exhausting, and I feel like I want to tell myself, "just be quiet, leave these poor kids alone." But, I can't. I can't leave it, because I know they have it in them.

Additionally, Kelly's journal entries reflect her desire and struggle to maintain high behavior standards. The entries also reveal the emotional and physical toll. With a raw and almost heartbreaking quality, Kelly wrote,

This week has been exhausting. I don't have enough control of the class in order to really follow up with someone who needs a redo. I go right to using the remove from. (September 22)

Still feeling like I can't catch my breath. I have forgotten to rehearse many things with the students, who don't want to sit now and listen how to do something. I even get tired of hearing the routines and reasons why. (September 29)

As the weeks progressed, her struggle continued. By the end of October her journal entry included:

I feel like I'm dragging and nagging. Frustration sets in too, and then I get behind. Meanie! (October 27)

There were no easy or quick answers for Kelly or for the other teachers who expressed concerns regarding the need for consistency. In fact, the strain of consistency was complicated by another challenge: time constraints.

Taking time to set expectations and to rehearse, redo, remove, and coach, while viewed as crucial by all the participating teachers, was also a chief source of stress. All teachers spoke about the pressure of balancing a heavy curricular load and attending to classroom management issues. Nicole explained how she began to find meaning in the midst of the tension. Commenting specifically about scheduling regular class meetings, she stated,

So I think a big learning, too, was how important it is to take that time. I was so afraid to take too much of that time away from the [curricular] expectations, but realizing the you're actually covering a number of expectations when you're getting children to learn to listen, how to brainstorm, to learn how to problem solve. All those are key things for life. (initial interview, October 17)

In a similar way, Kelly explained her dilemma between making time for life lessons and math lessons. While she recognized the importance of academic skills, she

also felt a responsibility to teach beyond the textbook. There was less time for the “lesson” by taking time to rehearse and redo. But she asked herself, *what is the real lesson?* She answered with this: “What’s more important here? Are they learning to be human beings and learning what is expected of them? Not just in the classroom but also for society?”

Yet, with this conviction about priorities, Kelly continued to grapple with guilt. She stated in her final interview in November, “but it’s the guilt I have with feeling like I’m not getting anything else done except for this.”

For rotary teachers (e.g., French or art teachers), guilt was not the overriding issue. However, seeing some students only once a week was problematic. The lack of time together decreased the opportunity for relationship-building and meant some teachers were just getting to know their students and their names in October. This also translated into increased behavior issues.

For Daniela, committed to providing extracurricular activities during nutrition breaks and after school, lack of time was also a problem. While she attempted to address behavior issues during class, she found it difficult to provide effective coaching talks midlesson. As a result, she scheduled coaching talks during her lunch breaks or after school. This meant some days she did not eat lunch and felt torn between her students and her extracurricular responsibilities. While trying to serve her students, she stretched her emotional and physical resources.

The stretching of resources also came into play when working with exceptional students. In fact, teaching students with special or high needs and assisting them with behavior difficulties emerged as a category of profound challenge for teachers.

Intertwined throughout conversations and journals were accounts of frustration and even anguish as the participants shared their struggles about students having great difficulty in their classrooms. One moving journal entry was submitted by Daniela, dated October 8:

I had one of my toughest teaching classes of the year today. Grade 8. High-risk. LD. ESL. There are a lot of behavior issues and mental health issues grouped together in the same class. (October 8)

Daniela went on to describe how the lesson began well. She provided them with step-by-step drawing instructions. Then she asked the students to select partners and draw one another. As she stated, "All chaos ensued." Several students began to scream. Others chased and kicked. One boy went to the sink and filled a bag of fish crackers with water; a girl began sniffing markers; two girls ran out of the classroom. Remarkably, Daniela was able to pull them together with an impromptu class meeting. She removed several students and set up a later "detention" for one. Within the journal entry, her stress was clear.

It makes you feel inadequate. I feel like I "lost some face" today. At break tomorrow I have to give a detention, set up the student vote, and I have to sit in on drama auditions. Can my life get any crazier?

Later in her journal, Daniela noted her desire to better engage her "at-risk" students and decrease the number of disruptions.

The wish to better assist exceptional students was a common thread for the participants. Kelly talked about her challenge with a grade 3 student. After weeks of difficult interactions, she overheard her student telling another that he thought Kelly did not like him. Kelly was very concerned to hear his interpretation of their relationship.

Upon reflection she stated, “I think it may be the, not the discouragement, but the sense of defeatedness that I feel, I think that may come across as, ‘I don’t like you.’” Over the ensuing months Kelly sought to find strategies that would engage her student, de-escalate issues, and improve their relationship.

Some schools had various resources to deal with difficult situations. For instance, Child and Youth Workers (CYW), professionals who work with children and adolescents in various therapeutic contexts, were present in half of the schools in the study. Working in tandem with the CYW to address emotional and family situations, the teachers were given some assistance. However, as Kelly stated, access to the CYW became a balancing act. Sending her student to see the CYW when he was having difficulty in class began to appear as a reward for misbehavior, and she wondered about the efficacy of this strategy.

Discovering how to best help exceptional students also meant the difficult task of determining their capabilities. Steve spoke about the need to find out what was learned behavior and what was not within the control of his students. Likewise, Nicole recognized that while rehearsing routines and appropriate behavior was important, for some students expectations must be altered.

Another crucial issue the teachers faced regarding working with exceptional students was how to help the other students understand the differences in expectations. When asked how he explained the apparent inconsistencies to his class, Steve said, from the beginning, he laid out that he was not treating his students “as everyone,” rather as individuals. That meant that some alterations in expectations would be inevitable. He explained his approach further.

I usually bring it back to the poster in my classroom, “fair in my classroom is not that everyone gets the same thing, but everyone gets what they need.” The kids need to understand that not everybody works exactly the same way and as such, not necessarily that the rules are different, but I deal with them on an individual basis. I don’t deal with them necessarily as a group. The expectations are going to be a little bit different for everybody. (final interview, November 25)

Similarly, Debbie spoke about her challenge of helping her class accept a student with social skills issues. She found that by subtly modeling how to treat him with respect and discussing how each student works differently (e.g., he works best with a computer), she could begin to blend exceptionality with acceptance.

A fourth and final challenge faced by the participants involved their unique positions as new teachers or teachers new to a position. For instance, though lack of time was an issue for all teachers, new teachers faced additional time pressures. As a first-year teacher and feeling overwhelmed the first term, Emily chose not to become involved with extracurricular activities at her grade 7 and 8 school. However, she recognized that she missed an opportunity to build relationships and develop rapport with her students. She felt torn and hoped to help with coaching sports in the second term.

On the other hand, Zoe, also a first-year teacher, became involved in many activities the first term, including sports, student council, and after-school help. A popular teacher with the students and proving her willingness to contribute to the school, by December, Zoe was exhausted. Close to tears on the day of our second interview, we rescheduled our meeting and Zoe went home early to rest.

Debbie also felt the effects of time pressure. In her desire to excel as a new teacher, she strove for excellence and often designated her planning time (50 minutes during the school day to plan and attend to administrative matters) to observe other teachers. That meant Debbie extended her day after school, often being the last teacher to go home in the evening. In addition, like other new teachers, she was involved in the board-directed New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), which meant she attended a number of workshops throughout the term. The arranging and planning for a supply teacher (sometimes involving 1-2 hours of extra preparation) was added to her day. When commenting on the pressure as a first-year teacher, she said, “it’s just really hard because I want it to be perfect, and it’s so not!”

Beyond the time pressures, new teachers and teachers with new assignments faced steep learning curves. For some, the learning involved curricular expectations. For example, Debbie needed to quickly learn and present the grade 3 and 4 English and French curricula. However, she also needed to learn about a school initiative regarding class profiles (a compact compilation of student achievement). While the school initiative held value, as Debbie stated, “it’s pushing me to do a lot of stuff that I would not be doing in my first year.”

The learning curves also involved addressing the “gray areas” of classroom management. For some teachers that meant learning how to identify and attend to the subtleties of slight misbehavior. Debbie expressed it this way:

I don’t know where that area is when I should be taking them out before the big explosion happens. So, them or me. Because I can feel it sometimes coming and

I'm like, *Oh I'm getting very frustrated with you*, and sometimes I say, "you are making my eye twitch, be careful." (initial interview, October 14)

Similarly, as a new art teacher, Daniela sought to navigate the gray area involving freedom and structure. At times, she wanted her students to "experiment and to try different things and to be creative and do their own thing in art." However, she recognized that for some students, that freedom created distraction and decreased productivity. Part of her learning curve was finding an effective balance.

To Daniela, another learning challenge for new teachers struck a cord. She spoke about her concerns regarding the stigmatization of new teachers when classroom management issues arose. Instead of riding the learning curves with new teachers, she had observed that some experienced teachers were less than kind. For this reason, Daniela felt many new teachers were reluctant to share their classroom management struggles. As she stated, it is difficult to ask for help "because it makes you feel like a failure, like you have in some way failed, that you're inferior, that you can't teach, that you don't deserve the job that you're in." It was actually this deep concern for other new teachers and her genuine desire to help that led Daniela to participate in this research. In her words,

And I really feel strongly that it shouldn't be like that, you should be able to ask for help, you should be able to bounce ideas off each other without feeling like somehow "I'm not a success, I'm not a good teacher because I need help with this." That's why I thought it [joining the study] was very important. (final interview, November 28)

Learning to manage time, balance school commitments, traverse gray areas, and deal with learning curves created numerous challenges for new teachers. Remarkably, in the midst of these challenges, the participants were able to not only make use of the Respect Circle but also to tailor the model. Customizing the Respect Circle was the fifth theme that emerged from the study.

Customizing the Respect Circle

Although the steps and tenets of the Respect Circle were presented to all the teachers in the same way, it became evident, through interview conversations and journal entries, that each participant implemented the Respect Circle with his or her unique approach. All of the teachers adapted the model in some manner. To capture the adjustments and adaptations, the changes are represented in several key ways, including (a) the model was adjusted to the needs of the class, (b) classroom management strategies were added to the model, and (c) the model was extended.

Several teachers were very active in adjusting the Respect Circle to the needs of their unique classes. Cathleen, for example, confidently changed the specific suggestions listed in the rehearse circle of the model to fit the requirements of her teenaged students. Interestingly, during an interview, when asked if she would change anything about the Respect Circle, Cathleen initially replied that she had diligently sought to maintain the model and would not alter it. But upon further discussion, it was discovered that she had automatically changed some features. As she stated, "To be honest, that's what I thought you were supposed to do. I thought this was a model that we could adapt for our situation." When I affirmed the malleability of the model, she proceeded to show how she

had, with her students, amended the routines and procedures to match the needs of her secondary school classes.

In like manner, Natalie altered the implementation of the Respect Circle with her high school ESL classes. When asked the question, “Would you recommend changing anything about the Respect Circle?” she replied,

Not necessarily changing. I really agree with the stages, the components, and with the meaning of them and how important they are. I think the emphasis on components may change a little according to the age of the students. (final interview, November 12)

Natalie went on to explain that, with her class, she introduced the Respect Circle using an indirect and subtle approach through modeling and discussion. In her opinion, the more rigorous rehearsal of routines and procedures would be best applied in the elementary school grades.

Steve was of a similar mindset. Concerning possible changes to the Respect Circle model, during the final interview he stated, “I’m not necessarily saying that I would change it as much as I would apply it in a slightly different way depending on the kids and the clientele.”

He then likened modification of the Respect Circle to adjustments made to the curriculum: “It’s kind of like the curriculum right? You have your game plan, and then you apply it; you have to adjust it to what the kids are able to take.” He explained that in some classes, a rigid model of behavior expectations would mean a number of students would be sent the office and “never get anything accomplished; they would never be in class.” By adjusting the expectations according to student need, rather than continually

sending students to the office or removing them from the classroom, Steve was able to coach and teach the students.

Not only did the teachers adjust the model to fit their classes, they also added their own classroom management strategies. Emily, moving from room to room to teach grade 7 and 8 French, found the need to use what she called “start-up activities.” This included independent work that the students completed while she set up her teaching resources at the beginning of each class. This strategy helped the students to “calm down,” and she felt she appeared more organized and able to manage the class.

By the final interview, Emily also instituted “The List.” After several months into her first term of teaching, she recognized that behavior issues continued to surface. She reviewed the expectations with the students from each class. Then she asked them to generate a list of consequences that they thought would be fair if the expectations were not met. As she explained, “they came up with things like: detention; come up in front of the class and dance and sing; clean up the room after school—I liked that one.” If an infraction occurred, the student’s name was written on the blackboard and he or she had an opportunity during the class to improve participation and behavior and the name would be erased. If the name remained, Emily would assign a consequence. She reported that at the beginning, her room and the school received “a lot of cleaning up.”

Debbie also supplemented the Respect Circle, adding a problem-solving strategy. Called KITTIK, this conflict resolution approach used the palindromic word to guide the students through steps including: Kee calm; give an “I” message; Talk it out. By teaching her students to independently solve recess and classroom disputes, she added to the social skills segment within the rehearse circle.

By December, at Zoe's school, she and her colleagues augmented the Respect Circle with a unified, department-wide ticket system. To assist teachers to better track their grade 7 and 8 students as they rotated through a variety of classes, students who disregarded the behavior expectations received an infraction ticket. The ticket was sent to the homeroom teacher of the student having difficulty. The system was created to increase communication between teachers and improve consistency in responding to inappropriate or defiant behavior. Telephone calls home, suspensions, and behavior plan development were some of the next steps included in the system.

Not only were class- or school-specific changes observed as the Respect Circle was customized, but also a final area of modification: expansion into new directions. For example, Cathleen excitedly talked about how she, with her colleagues' support, was in the midst of creating a PowerPoint presentation for the 100 secondary school students in her department. As school resumed after the Christmas break, she hoped to present the students with a visual, unified message regarding respect and caring behavior.

Continuing upon the idea of expanding the Respect Circle by creating a visual representation, several teachers spoke about generating a Respect Circle symbol. Wendy planned to make a poster. Nicole hoped to prepare an anchor chart (chart paper with salient points written or illustrated in a student-friendly manner). Natalie planned to ask her high school students to craft visual depictions of the model and add their own words.

Another direction of expansion included parental involvement. Three teachers discussed the value of sharing the Respect Circle with the parents of their students. Kelly talked about the possibility of sending the Respect Circle home with students in June. Through the summer, the students and parents "would see it on their fridge at home" and

be reminded about the guidelines at school. Nicole advanced Kelly's idea by discussing how the Respect Circle would need to be reworded or revised to better reach the parents and that the students could be actively involved in teaching the parents about the Respect Circle. Cathleen felt it was imperative to share the Respect Circle with the parents, ensuring open communication between home and school regarding behavior expectations at school. As an aside, Nicole explained how she was successfully using the rehearse, redo, and remove components with her own young children at home.

This customizing or "owning" of the model revealed an interest in pushing the boundaries of the Respect Circle. By retrofitting the model to suit an individual student, class, or school, the Respect Circle was adjusted and expanded. Taking the lead from the participants' flexibility and creativity, the next theme of this chapter includes an examination of the model and new ideas gleaned from the teachers.

Scrutinizing the Respect Circle

Throughout the course of the study the participants offered comments regarding a variety of features of the Respect Circle model. The comments were valuable guideposts and form the backbone of the final theme: scrutinizing the Respect Circle. When scrutinizing the Respect Circle model and how it worked, as implemented by the participants, three categories emerged. The categories include perceived strengths of the model, gaps or weaknesses, and new ideas or directions for the Respect Circle.

The positive features or strengths of the Respect Circle most commonly mentioned by the participants included the straightforward language, the simplicity of the steps and visual depiction, the comprehensive format, and the flexibility of the model. When asked to comment about her experience using the Respect Circle, Nicole

mentioned that the clear language was an asset. She particularly liked the word “redo.” She noted, “it’s such an easy word for them [the students] to understand. And all the ages, which is really neat.” She also found the suggested wording provided in the redo circle helpful. The specificity of the suggestions (e.g., “That doesn’t sound like how we treat one another in our class, try that again.”) provided guidance with a respectful approach to managing and redirecting misbehavior. Steve also suggested that the simple, common language represented in the Respect Circle could serve a school well as teachers and administrators attempt to implement a unified approach.

The visual display of the circles of the model showing the straightforward steps was also mentioned as a strength of the Respect Circle. As Nicole stated, “I love the visuals of it [the model]. I find that it’s a really easy way for me to refocus.” Daniela felt that the model was “nicely laid out” and “very clear.” She continued by suggesting that having a simple, visual classroom management model, particularly for beginning teachers, is helpful. Debbie’s comments corroborated that perspective. As a new teacher, Debbie talked about how she liked having a “protocol to follow.”

Both Debbie and Daniela also viewed the Respect Circle as a comprehensive way to present and group various components of a classroom management plan. For instance, Daniela included social skill development, role-playing, and the recently mandated provincial Character Education program as part of the Respect Circle. When referring to the Respect Circle and the elements within, Debbie said, “It seems to me a consolidation of every other little piece. They just all find a home.”

The flexibility of the Respect Circle was also seen as a positive point by half of the participants. When asked to comment about her experience using the Respect Circle at her school, Zoe remarked,

The Respect Circle at our school in particular, it being a K to 8 school, it has been very, very successful. It's had its challenges, but they have been challenges that have been easy to overcome because there's so much flexibility with the Respect Circle. It's fairly explicit, but it still has room for interpretation, I wouldn't say interpretation, but it has room for movement. So you can take it to where you need it to go. And we found that it's been very successful here. (final interview, December 16)

With her staff invested in the Respect Circle, suggestions during staff meetings were given and alterations to the model were made. Similarly, the participants of the study felt free to alter and adjust the Respect Circle as needed.

To shed light on the strength of the Respect Circle, Zoe, at our final interview, added her unique perspective. As part of a whole school approach to implementing the Respect Circle, she stated,

I just think that the Respect Circle is an integral part of our school. Everybody knows what it is. Everybody knows the language. And in terms of classroom management and managing behavior in our school, it's played a huge, huge role.

Although the Respect Circle was an integral and positive part of Zoe's school, a number of gaps or weaknesses in the model also came to light during the data collection. One of the perceived gaps included a lack of instruction regarding when to use a redo or remove and what to do if a student refused to redo or move to time-out. This issue was

raised in several journal entries and interviews. Some teachers wondered about how much grace to give students before a redo or remove were required. Additionally, if a redo was done poorly, Debbie questioned her follow-up strategy. She asked that the steps from redo to remove be more procedural and explicit. Regarding a remove, Steve had this to say:

I don't find too much gray area with the redo, I usually find that pretty black and white. Where I find difficulty is going from the redo to the remove. When do you say, "OK, enough is enough"? (initial interview, October 21)

Connected with the lack of guidance about redos and removes, a second gap in the model appeared. Lack of advice regarding what to do with the rest of the students while the teacher was administering a redo or remove was of concern. Highlighting this point, Daniela stated,

They [students] don't always act up when they're doing independent work. Sometimes they act up in the middle of your lesson and you're trying to teach, and you can't leave the rest of the class because they don't have instructions. What are you supposed to do with that kid at that particular moment in time until an opportune time comes for that coaching? Do you take the time away from the rest of the class all the time and coach that kid? (final interview, November 28)

A third weakness involved inadequate direction in managing a situation in which a child was doing something that *should not* be redone (e.g., swearing, annoying others, work refusal). This concern appeared in journal entries as teachers recorded their actions and student responses. Cathleen, in a journal entry dated November 4, carefully chose to *not* "rescue" a high school student who daily refused to find a pencil with which to work.

But she wondered how to address the student's opposition and wrote, "What would the next step be in the model?" Addressing cruel or inappropriate language was also a difficult area. Some teachers found themselves at a loss when attempting to ask students for courteous apologies.

A fourth and final shortfall of the Respect Circle model included concerns about the wording of the circles. While some teachers liked the rehearse, redo, remove, and review line-up, other teachers preferred different wording. Two participants began, unconsciously, using the word review for the rehearse circle. Emily explained it this way, "Yes, now that you mention it, I have been using review. 'So let's review the rules.' And then you have review, redo, and remove." Three other teachers expressed concern that the word *reflect* and its representation did not hold a prominent enough position in the model. Interestingly, the shortfalls and concerns shape and affect the third area of scrutiny: new ideas.

When asked about suggestions regarding the Respect Circle and possible improvements, the participants offered a variety of new ideas. As mentioned in the section entitled *Customizing the Respect Circle*, many of the participants suggested that a visual model for the students and/or parents would increase the understanding and ease of implementation. PowerPoint presentations, charts, and laminated posters that could be transported to gym classes or used by rotating teachers were amongst the suggestions. Also proposed were modifications to the model, simplifying or even eliminating all words and allowing the students to add their own meaningful phrases or reminders.

Another idea was put forth by participants. Several teachers suggested that a whole school approach would increase the effectiveness of the Respect Circle. Nicole said,

I know one thing that would make it more effective. I'd love to see it in a whole school because then in the halls and on the playground, everybody is using the same language. (final interview, November 21)

Zoe explained how a consistent, broad application of the Respect Circle can affect a school. When asked if her teaching experience would be different if she had not implemented the Respect Circle, she said,

Definitely, definitely. The Respect Circle is not something that you just talk about a little bit and hope that people pick up, it's something that needs to be put into constant practice. But it's not something that takes a lot of time or effort to put into practice. It's just redoing it, it's rehearsing and redoing it. Once you have that rehearse piece in, and once you have an understanding across the board from students, parents, and staff members, that's when it's the most effective. We've been using it for so long I think we forget that we're using it. (initial interview, October 30)

A wish for Zoe was to see how the Respect Circle was being used in other classrooms.

Three teachers suggested that the component called reflect should be heightened. One teacher recommended increasing the sizing of the word; another advised that the word could be placed as a slice through all circles, showing how embedded reflection should be. Similarly, a third teacher thought the word would look more foundational if placed in a more prominent position.

While implementing the Respect Circle, the participants provided valuable feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the model. New ideas about the model provide inspiration and future direction.

Summary of the Chapter

In Chapter Four, the analysis of the research data was presented. The emerging themes revealed the diversity and breadth of classroom management concerns and issues. The themes were organized into six categories including: relationships, proaction, changes in teaching practice, facing challenges, customizing the Respect Circle, and scrutinizing the Respect Circle. Chapter Five will provide an interpretation of these themes and demonstrate their association with the existing literature. Implications for practice, theory, and future research will bring Chapter Five to a close.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

A brief review and summary of the underpinnings of the study provide the backdrop for this chapter. Moving beyond the summary, a discussion of the findings and links to literature are presented. To round out the chapter, implications and final remarks are offered.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of teachers as they put a classroom management model into practice. With the Respect Circle as a reference point, the study focused upon the decisions, actions, and reactions regarding classroom management as the first term of a new year unfolded. The research question that directed the investigation was as follows: What are the experiences of teachers as they implement the classroom management model called the Respect Circle?

A collective case study approach was used as the research methodology. Ten teachers from a large southwestern Ontario board of education were selected through a purposeful sampling strategy. Data collection took place from the beginning of October to the beginning of December 2008.

To achieve an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the teachers, several sources of data were utilized. Reflective journals, one focus group interview, and two one-to-one interviews per participant provided a rich source of qualitative information. To analyze the data, content analysis was employed. As a result of the analysis, six themes emerged including relationships, proaction, changes in teaching practice, facing challenges, customizing the Respect Circle, and scrutinizing the Respect Circle.

The following section provides a discussion of the research findings as they relate to the research question and the existing literature. The themes that emerged during analysis and presented in Chapter Four serve as a springboard for the discussion.

Discussion

The breadth and depth of the topics and concerns expressed by the participants were testament to the complex landscape of the classroom. Although the focus of my research was upon classroom management, a wide spectrum of subjects, thoughts, and emotions were unveiled as the teachers shared their experiences through journals and interviews. By connecting the participants' experiences and comments to the current literature regarding teachers and classroom management, several topics of discussion arise.

The Importance of Relationships

One important finding from my research was that classroom management is contingent upon teacher-student relationships. In exploring this finding, I felt my first responsibility was to examine whether my interview questioning or personal beliefs about the importance of relationships had steered the participants toward discussing teacher-student connections. In reviewing the transcripts, I found that the comments regarding the importance of relationships arose without prompting from me. In fact, the participants' comments stemmed from two general and initial requests for remarks: (a) "Talk to me about classroom management," and (b) "Please share with me how your classroom management is going." The open-ended nature of the queries and resultant spontaneous and extensive responses regarding relationships confirm that teacher-student bonds are foremost on the minds of the teachers.

This emphasis upon relationships is consistent with the current literature regarding classroom management. Belvel and Jordan (2003) state that the teacher-student relationship is the single most important element to consider when building harmony and effective classroom management. Brown (2004), in his study examining the strategies used by urban teachers to reach and teach the students in their culturally diverse and challenging classrooms, found that all 13 teachers interviewed relied on their strong relationships with students, rather than punitive measures, to maintain positive classroom management. Jeanne Gibbs (2001), in her book entitled "Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together, focuses upon the importance of relationships in school and shows how to build community through the use of four agreements: attentive listening, appreciation, right to pass, and mutual respect. Likewise, a recent three-part resource created by the Alberta Ministry of Education (2008) emphasizes the significance of relationships within the classroom and school setting. In the booklet focused specifically upon classroom management, the authors write that positive relationships are "the key to a safe and caring classroom climate that invites and supports positive behavior and skilled problem solving" (p. 9).

All the participants in my study reported that building relationships was a priority the first weeks of school. They accomplished this by getting to know the names, interests, and learning styles of their students. Interestingly, only 1 teacher talked about how she allowed students to know her. My lack of specificity in questioning the participants about the exchange of information in the early days of school may account for the resultant lack of evidence. However, the sharing of information is an important point. Brown (2004) found that exchanging information is another tool in creating early bonds. He states that

the effective teachers in his study viewed the getting acquainted period as reciprocal. Teachers asked students for information and also told the students about their own interests, including being up-front about in-class behavior that most frustrated them as teachers.

This element of reciprocity extends to the next finding, regarding respect. While respect was mentioned by all the participants, 2 teachers specifically discussed mutual respect. In their opinions, giving and receiving respect was integral to their approach to relationship-building and classroom management. Several researchers corroborate their opinions. Kohn (1996), a strong proponent of relationship-building within the classroom and school community, contends that students are more likely to show respect if the teachers show respect; that students will only care for others if they first believe they are cared about. Likewise, Brown (2004) found that the most effective teachers in the challenging New York classrooms recognized the importance of mutual respect and understood how their actions and words had an impact on the development of teacher-student relationships.

Given the emphasis upon mutual respect within the Respect Circle model, it is surprising that 8 of the 10 of participants did not talk about the give-and-take of respect. This finding (or lack of) suggests possible model implementation issues. Perhaps the focus on relationships and mutual respect was not fully conveyed. Perhaps the teachers are unsure of how to create a mutually respectful climate. It may also point to varying belief systems. It is possible that for some teachers, respect from students is viewed as more important than respect shown to students.

Regarding respect, humor emerged as another point of interest. The use of humor, including the ability of 1 teacher to laugh at herself, was seen as an important step in building respect and rapport with the students. Research (Brown, 2004) bears this out. But there is a caveat. Bondy et al. (2007) state that humor must be handled with care. Cruel or biting sarcasm undermines relationships. Several of the participants in my study were cognizant of the downside of humor and were quick to quell humor that was offensive or critical.

Another pertinent finding regarding relationships concerned the effectiveness of the coaching talks. As part of the Respect Circle model, if a student is removed (i.e., given a time-out), the teacher makes time to speak individually with the student, providing explanations and social skill coaching. All the teachers reported taking time to talk one-to-one with students having difficulty. They also reported, sometimes with surprised delight, that the students responded favorably to the coaching. The element of taking time with students to provide encouragement, instruction, clarification, and a chance for both teacher and student to communicate frustration, anger, and (hopefully) eventual understanding is a prominent feature of the student-centered or guidance approach to classroom management (Gartrell, 2007). The results of my study confirm the value of expending time and energy to guide students.

The Power of Proaction

While relationships dominated many of the conversations during the interviews, a second theme of interest also merits discussion. As teachers implemented the rehearse component of the Respect Circle, many participants experienced an epiphany of sorts. The proactive approach or “front-loading,” as Cathleen called it, included clarifying and

rehearsing expectations. This meant creating (or revisiting) classroom agreements and routines with their students. After taking time to solidify expectations, the participants reported improved student behavior and fewer disruptions. The value of developing and making expectations clear appears in recent studies. Bondy et al. (2007) discovered that effective teachers did not make assumptions regarding student behavior. They did not expect that the students knew what appropriate behavior looked and sounded like. With this in mind, the teachers were careful to use a variety of strategies to explicitly communicate and teach classroom rules and procedures. Reteaching occurred throughout the year. Similarly, the teachers in my study reported returning to expectations numerous times throughout the term, reviewing and practicing the standards.

Connected to the setting of clear expectations, 4 teachers reported an intriguing phenomenon. After the teachers had worked with their classes to make expectations transparent, some students became self-regulating, even offering to “self-administer” redos. This student self-discipline is explored in the current literature. Curwin and Mendler (1988) talked about classrooms where student self-regulation is the priority. In these classrooms, the locus of power shifts from the teacher to the student. In like manner, Brown (2004) noted that teachers who can balance authority while providing students with opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor behavior are better able to avoid the power struggles that can be toxic to relationships. Furthermore, Ritter and Hancock (2007) found that experienced, traditionally trained teachers were inclined to allow students to exert influence on classroom activities. They were less controlling and more interactive in approach. Conversely, novice teachers tended to feel that it would be irresponsible to allow the students substantial control. Of interest is the fact that the 3 of

the 4 teachers who reported student self-regulation in my study are new teachers. Ritter and Hancock's work regarding the reluctance of new teachers to encourage the sharing of power may, in part, explain why only 4 teachers reported student self-regulation. However, a further interpretation could be that some teachers lack understanding regarding the importance and effectiveness of student self-regulation. The teachers may also require more guidance concerning how to encourage students to take greater responsibility in their decisions and actions.

Within the theme of proaction, the finding regarding reflection is significant. Although the word "reflect" was included in the Respect Circle model with a brief explanation, it was interesting that half of the teachers reported that reflection influenced their classroom management practice. The reflection in which the participants engaged may have been the result of the methodology of this study. By requesting ongoing journal entries, participants were, in a way, forced to think about their actions and reactions regarding classroom management. Predictably, the integration of reflection appears to have enriched their teaching experience.

What was unexpected, however, was the acknowledgment by Cathleen, one of the most experienced teachers, that she (and her experienced colleagues) had not previously utilized the process of professional reflection. With the busyness and demands of day-to-day teaching, Cathleen had not incorporated reflection into her teacher practice. I speculate that her experience is not uncommon. While the power of reflection is noted in research, particularly with regards to preservice teacher candidates (Downey, 2008), there appears to be less research regarding how practicing teachers use reflection. I suggest that in current classrooms, reflection is predominantly an informal and perhaps infrequent

activity. However, the inspiring story of how Cathleen's reflection led to a department-wide collaboration and subsequent development of common expectations and interventions highlights the importance of reflection.

Change Is Good

Although Cathleen's story stood out as an example of change as the result of reflection, all the participants made changes to their classroom management practice, indicating a degree of deliberation and adjustment. In particular, 2 teachers reported substantial changes. Both Wendy, a first-year teacher, and Natalie, an experienced teacher but new to her position, talked about initially acting "out of character" when applying classroom management strategies. Their self-images as teachers and classroom managers did not match with their actions. Raising their voices with the students or relying on the principal for backup had not been part of their vision of classroom management.

Kagan's (1992) research offers some insight regarding teacher-self-image. Her extensive overview of 40 research studies indicates that the first task of teachers is to reconstruct their self-images as they face reality in their classrooms. In fact, Kagan states that before teachers can hope to know their students, they must first make peace with themselves. As the first term progressed, and as they implemented the Respect Circle, both Wendy and Natalie found their teaching stride. As their classroom management convictions and practice lined up, they reported they could laugh more, give more, and enjoy their jobs.

The Cost of Consistency

Although enjoyment and delight with students and classroom management victories were reported during the study, the data revealed two particularly pervasive challenges: time constraints and consistency. All teachers reported a strong desire to be consistent with behavioral expectations. Several teachers strongly attributed improved classroom management to their ability to uphold agreed-upon standards. But the teachers also talked about the cost of consistency. Being consistent meant an expenditure of time and energy. It meant that curricular objectives were put on hold while behavioral issues were addressed. This translated into guilt and tension regarding their perceived responsibilities to teach content, assess, and report. The challenge of lack of time to implement classroom management strategies is not limited to new teachers. Melnick and Meister (2008) report that both experienced and beginning teachers struggle with time management. Furthermore, with increasing demands upon teachers, including the current emphasis on standardized testing, Melnick and Meister suggest that the time issue is not easily remedied.

To better understand the issue of time and consistency, an illustration may be of benefit. I suggest the push and pull for consistency versus time versus energy can be represented in an equation. In Figure 3, the cost of consistency is highlighted by the elements required to obtain it. Clear expectations must precede any attempt to insist that a behavior or routine is maintained. Next, energy and time must be committed to the reinforcement of standards. The participants expressed frustration and fatigue regarding consistency. By outlining the input required to attain consistency, their concerns become more tangible and explicable.

$$\text{Clear Expectations} + \text{Energy} + \text{Time} = \text{Consistency}$$

Figure 3. The equation of consistency.

However, along with knowing the cost of consistency, it is important to also believe in the benefits. Bondy et al. (2007) spotlight the importance of being “warm demanders” (p. 341). The effective teachers highlighted in the Bondy et al. study constantly insisted upon high standards. Interestingly, in their insistence, they maintained a respectful and caring approach. Behavior issues were decreased; mutual respect was increased. While the participants of my study talked about the exhaustion regarding the maintenance of standards, they also admitted that the alternative—skipping consistency—would ultimately lead to less productivity, less cooperation, and compromised learning.

Under “Revisement”

One of the most exciting findings was the ability of the participants to adjust the Respect Circle to meet their needs. One participant upgraded the suggested routines and procedures in the rehearse component to better match the needs of her secondary school students. Another teacher created a PowerPoint presentation to present the model to her students. Several teachers added their own classroom management tools and social skills lessons, meshing their ideas with the Respect Circle.

Some of the strategies added to the model deserve special consideration. At two different schools, a consequence strategy was implemented. Emily, a rotating grade 7 and 8 teacher, created with her classes a list of infractions and consequences. If an infraction occurred, the student’s name was written on the board. If the student’s behavior improved, the name was removed. If not, the student would receive the agreed-upon consequence (e.g., cleaning the classroom). Zoe’s grade 7 and 8 department, in an attempt to better track the behavior of their rotating students, developed a ticket system.

A student who disregarded behavior standards received a ticket that was delivered to the student's homeroom teacher. Consequences followed (e.g., a phone call home).

It is interesting to note that the consequence strategies reflect a teacher-centered behavior modification approach. While control through consequences might appear efficient (Canter & Canter, 1984), educators indicate that there is a downside. Kohn (1996) and McCaslin and Good (1992) favor greater student self-responsibility. They also advocate the consideration of the individual needs of students rather than regimenting an exacting and across-the-board (literally) management policy.

While I agree with the humanistic approach suggested by Kohn (1996), I believe strongly that the needs of both the students and the teachers must be considered. Kagan (1992) makes it clear that when teachers are feeling overwhelmed, they tend to resort to more controlling and custodial attitudes and treatment of students. If teachers are feeling overwhelmed, I suggest that insisting that a hurting, weary teacher implement time-consuming guidance methods is comparable to handing out infraction tickets to a student who is overtired or dealing with a difficult home situation.

Ideally, the focus of classroom management shifts from the goal of disobedience reduction to the goals of mutual respect and increased student self-regulation. However, the participants of this study provide an example of the complexity of needs and overlapping issues. With 25 to 35 people in a classroom, representing a plethora of unique requirements, it is no wonder that teachers can feel overwhelmed and that classroom management magic is best measured in mere moments.

To further consider classroom management concerns and the ramifications of this study, the following section delves into implications and future research.

Implications

The findings of this study lead to a number of implications. The implications are divided into the following three areas: implications for theory, implications for practice, and implications for further research.

Implications for Theory

The conceptual framework behind this research and the development of the Respect Circle model are based upon a respectful, humane, structured, yet flexible approach. The participants affirmed the straightforward language, the simplicity of the steps and visual format, the comprehensive approach, and the flexibility of the Respect Circle. However, the findings and comments from the participants have sparked a revisiting of the model design.

One of the main recommendations made by the participants was to create a model that could be given to students and parents. Because the model was intended for teachers, some adjustments were necessary. To simplify the model and to allow teachers and students to customize the circles with greater ease, the words in the rehearse ring were removed. Also, in response to suggestions that the reflect component be more fully represented, thus symbolizing the importance of reflection at every circle, the word reflect now intersects all circles (see Figure 4).

Other concerns about the Respect Circle model involved instruction and guidance. Some teachers were unclear regarding the use of the redo and remove and requested a more step-by-step process, delineating when to use the remove. With this in mind, I have added a step-by-step guide to the explanation of the Respect Circle (see Figure 5). The arrows denote continued escalation and a teacher's response.

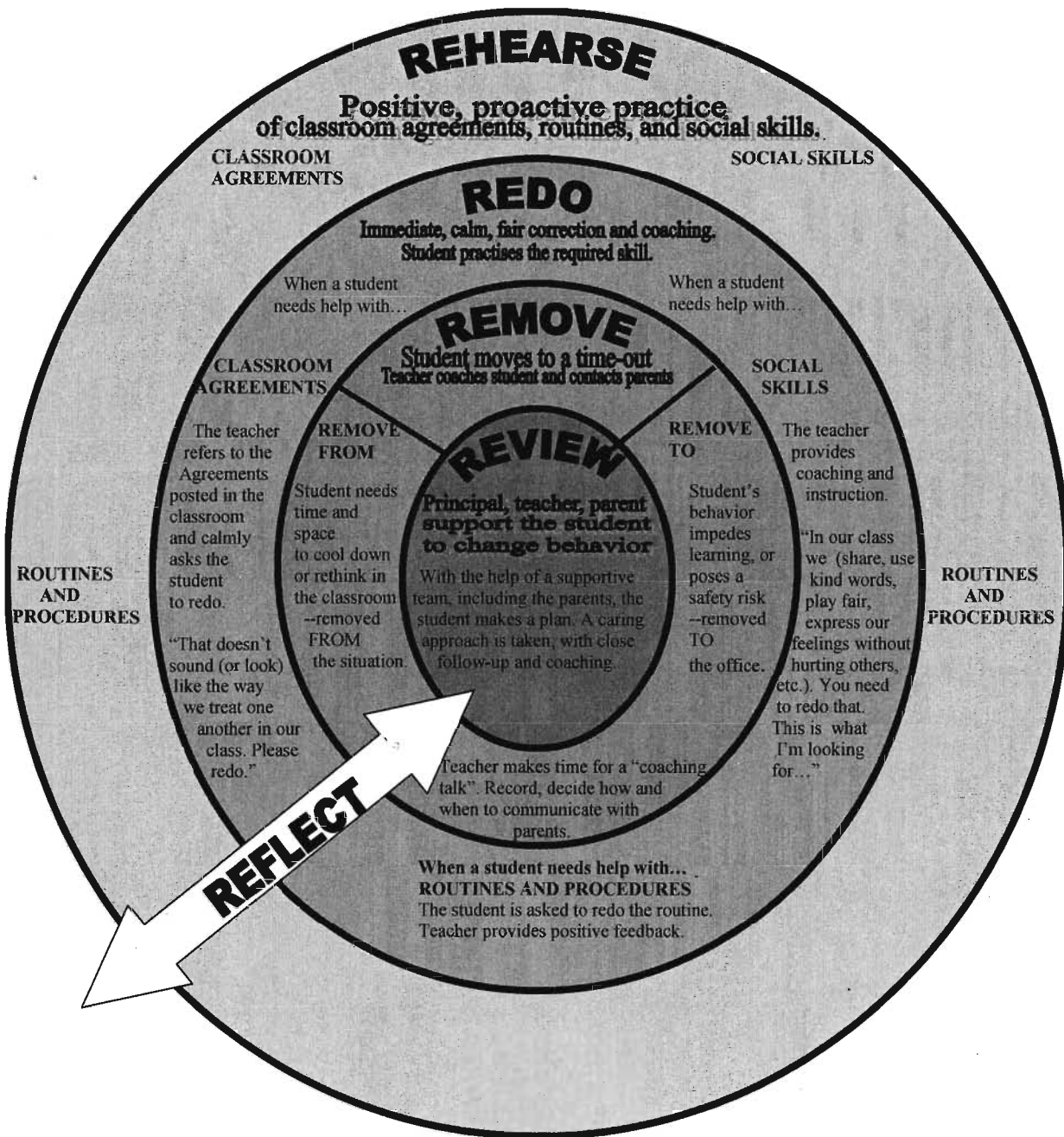


Figure 4. The Respect Circle, revised.

Working with a Student who is having difficulty

1. Make eye contact (being sensitive to cultural needs).
2. Direct the student to the Class Agreements or Peace Charts.
“Remember what listening to others looks like.”
3. Change location of the student. “Please work over here” or “sit by me.”
4. **Remove from** (to a quiet spot): remember to coach and to record.

If the situation escalates

1. Stand near (or kneel, being sensitive to the student’s need for space) and ask
“What’s up, you seem upset” or “you don’t seem like yourself.”
2. “Your voice is really loud. I can help you better if you speak calmly.”
3. “I’ll give you a few minutes to take some deep breaths and check back with you.”
(Walk away, keep an eye on, safety is a priority)
4. (a few minutes later) “How are you doing?”
“What do you see as the problem?”
“What do you want?”
“What’s in the way?”
(Model calmness)
5. Talk or write out a plan together.

If at any time hitting, kicking, or throwing happens, contact the office. Remember to keep all your students (and you) safe.

this becomes a remove to

Figure 5. A step-by-step guide to use the remove and manage escalating behavior.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study highlight the experiences of teachers as they implemented the Respect Circle and grappled with classroom management challenges. The insight gained can assist in providing practical suggestions regarding how to support new teachers with classroom management and how to implement the Respect Circle. As a group of new and experienced teachers, the participants demonstrated some common needs regarding classroom management. The needs fall into several categories and direct the suggestions.

The need for reflection. The teachers of the study showed the ability to grow and adjust teaching practices. Many teachers shifted their classroom management approach, providing students with clear expectations, practice time, and time taken to build respectful relationships through class meetings and social skills instruction. However, as Morris-Rothchild and Brassard (2006) suggest, increased self-awareness must precede change. Reflection, the heart of change, takes time and energy. Reflection must be encouraged, and even taught. To deepen and galvanize the reflective practices of teachers, action research can be undertaken. Mitchell, Reilly, and Loque (2009) describe action research as follows: “Within this framework, teachers themselves are involved in researching the relationship between their theories of learning, instruction, and teaching, and their practices in the classroom” (p. 345). They go on to point out that in action research, the teacher is both the subject and object of the research. This double role is not always easy to negotiate and requires the support of other colleagues and administrators. This leads to the next area of concern.

The need for supportive school administration. Ideally, initiatives to support reflection, growth, and action research would be supported by the administration. Researchers indicate that administrators significantly affect the experiences of new teachers (Kagan, 1992; Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007). The participants of this study substantiated this premise. The new teachers who mentioned their principals were generally positive about their interaction. However, the participants also mentioned the pressure to perform well during evaluations performed by their principals. The evaluations consisted of several observations throughout the year, with follow-up meetings. The results of the evaluations determined if a teacher moved from probationary to contract status.

Interestingly, the participants, when commenting on how well the observed lesson went, all mentioned classroom management. The teachers felt more confident and satisfied with their performance if they had maintained effective control of the class. This highlights the fears of new teachers regarding administrators' high standards concerning classroom management.

With these concerns in mind, I suggest several recommendations. School administrators must provide an effective and caring means of evaluating new teachers, monitoring and encouraging them with emotional support, and practical classroom management strategies. School administrators must be sensitive to the coping styles and abilities of new teachers, helping them to avoid the overcommitment experienced by several new teachers in this study. Some participants expressed a desire for more assistance and talked about being essentially on their own. As Daniela eloquently pointed out, with the stigma that can accompany classroom management issues, new teachers

may feel the need to hide their struggles, further increasing isolation. If school administrators set a tone that all teachers are the mentors of a new teacher, support and acceptance may be better achieved.

The need for a school-wide approach. As many of the participants suggested, a school-wide approach would be helpful. If the Respect Circle represents a common approach in a school, with common expectations and a common language, consistency can enhance the implementation and learning. Forming learning partners or support groups within the school to monitor the implementation and to provide a forum for questions, concerns, and complaints could assist in bringing teachers together in a joint project in which they have a voice. Rather than mandating the Respect Circle, and possibly creating resistance, teachers must be invited into the process and decision-making. Additionally, allowances for teacher individuality must be considered, making use of the flexibility of the Respect Circle.

The need for classroom management instruction. Some participants expressed frustration and even anguish as they attempted to work out classroom management issues. They seemed at a loss for information. They also discussed their lack of classroom management instruction in preservice programs. Alvarez (2006) reports that only 30% of teacher training programs in the United States offer courses on classroom management. While the Respect Circle offers a plan and strategies, because of the complexity surrounding classroom management, the Respect Circle is only one piece of a very large puzzle. With this in mind, I strongly recommend that specific courses about classroom management would be of benefit. While emphasis is placed upon teaching reading and mathematics, the participants conceded that without effective classroom management,

learning is seriously compromised. Borrowing from Martin (2004) and from the successes of the participants, I suggest that an effective classroom management course must begin by guiding the teachers through a process that examines their underlying assumptions and philosophies regarding classroom management. The course must also present an array of classroom management perspectives. Martin found that other effective components in a classroom management course included instructing teachers to explicitly teach social skills to students, to perform task analysis before lessons or activities, to learn the importance of teacher self-management of emotions and responses, and to effectively use authority with care and sensitivity.

Implications for Further Research

A number of questions and directions for further research arise from this study. Because of the limitations in time, scope, and location, the ability to generalize the findings of this study are restricted. A natural next step to enriching the understanding of classroom management in general and the Respect Circle in particular would be to increase the sample size. More male teachers, teachers from other boards, and increased representation from a variety of ethnic groups would broaden the research lens. Also, while 3 experienced teachers participated in this study, by comparing a greater number of experienced teachers with an equal number of new teachers, the results could demonstrate how the developmental stages of a teacher affect the ability to manage a classroom. Additionally, the ability to juxtapose classrooms where the Respect Circle is in operation against the experiences of teachers not using the model could provide added insight. With this approach, it would be possible to better assess the effect of the model upon classroom management practice.

Similarly, a wider perspective could be gleaned from a longer study. Tracking new teachers from the first day of school to the last day in June would provide a broader picture of the experiences of teachers as classroom management evolves. Continuing with follow-up studies over several years would provide an excellent opportunity to examine changes in practices, attitudes, and personal and professional self-images.

Further research regarding how to best implement the Respect Circle would also be beneficial. With this study, while the Respect Circle was initially introduced and explained to the participants, ongoing implementation guidance was not provided. It would be interesting to discover how coaching and/or mentoring with regard to the implementation of the model would affect the experiences of participating teachers.

The study by Martin (2004) demonstrated the effectiveness of classroom management instruction. Further research could include innovative teacher education programs that incorporated classroom management instruction. Comparing a program which focuses on extensive practica, an emphasis upon classroom management training, and time for reflection, against a traditional model, could yield important data regarding how best to teach teachers about classroom management.

Additionally, while teacher education programs cannot be therapy, the courses and ensuing discussions can be therapeutic. Learning how teacher education programs can better assist teachers in gaining self-awareness, communication and relationship-building skills, and knowledge about conflict management would enhance the classroom management expertise of new teachers.

Final Words

As a new teacher, I felt the sting of classroom management pain. To save my sanity and my career, I searched for solutions. The Respect Circle is the result of my fascinating search-and-rescue journey. Along the way, I discovered the longstanding, widespread, and seemingly intractable nature of classroom management issues.

I also found out that I was not alone in my struggle. It is my hope that this study sheds light upon the challenges teachers, particularly new teachers, face regarding classroom management.

I realize that models must evolve. I am very grateful for the insight provided by the teachers in this study. I applaud their courage to honestly share their concerns, fears, and triumphs.

I like the analogy that Furay (cited in Salvo, Kibble, Furay, & Sierra, 2005) uses when describing the role of a teacher. She likens teaching to the art of blowing glass. As apprentices new to the craft, the glass-blowers may be familiar with the ingredients and the measurements required to create a work of art. But, in their inexperience, they make countless mistakes. The work is imperfect, and yet it is a beginning. With the help of master craftspeople, guidance, time, and trial and error, the apprentices eventually improve.

As new teachers learn the craft of classroom management in the crucible of their own classrooms, it is my hope that the Respect Circle can play a part in honing their skills, increasing their confidence, and helping them to create a caring and respectful place for children to learn and grow.

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Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol

Project: The Respect Circle: Developing a Classroom Management Model to Support New Teachers

Time of Focus Group Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: Katie Brown

Interviewees: _____

Agenda: Focus Group/Info session

Provide refreshments!

1. Welcome and introduce self.
2. Facilitate the introductions of the participants.
(We come with different backgrounds, years of teaching, and grades we are currently teaching)
3. Explain my involvement with the development of the Respect Circle and the possibility that more schools in our board may choose to adopt the program.
4. Collect consent forms (take time for any questions).
5. Provide details regarding the purpose of the study.
6. Introduce the Respect Circle, following along with the handouts they received previously in the mail.
7. Present scenarios
 - a) A student walks into the classroom and disrupts the lesson; how can you use the Respect Circle to address the situation?
 - b) A student refuses to take some time to cool off; what can you do?
 - c) A student hits another student during class; what actions can you take?
 - d) A student swears in front of the class; how would you handle this?
 - e) A student refuses to share materials; how would you use the Respect Circle to help him?
 - f) You feel that you might have handled a situation more effectively; what should you do?
8. Address questions or concerns along the way.
9. Hand out journals and make appointments for one-on-one interviews.
10. Close with thanks.

The data gathered during this session will include concerns and questions posed by the participants and times and dates for interviews. Also, the formulation of preliminary questions for the next round of interviews will occur.

Appendix B

Initial One-on-One Interview Protocol

Project: The Respect Circle: Developing a Classroom Management Model to Support New Teachers

Time of Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: Katie Brown

Interviewee: _____

Advise the interviewee of the purpose of the interview, what will be done with the data, the confidentiality of the data, and the approximate length of the interview. Turn the tape recorder on and test it.

Questions:

1. Talk to me about what classroom management means to you.
2. How would you describe yourself as a classroom manager?
3. How is your classroom management going as you begin the school year?
4. Do you have any examples of using the Respect Circle?
5. Do you have questions or comments you would like to add?

Thank the interviewee. Inform him/her that a copy of the transcript will be sent to him/her to verify. Respond to any questions.

Appendix C

Follow-Up Interview Protocol

Project: The Respect Circle: Developing a Classroom Management Model to Support New Teachers

Time of Interview: _____ Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: Katie Brown

Interviewee: _____

Advise the interviewee of the purpose of the interview, what will be done with the data, the confidentiality of the data, and the approximate length of the interview. Turn the tape recorder on and test it.

Questions:

1. Tell me about your experience using the Respect Circle.
2. Do you think using the Respect Circle has changed or affected your classroom management (comparing September to now)?
3. In looking at the Respect Circle, would you suggest changing any of the components? Which components would you keep?
4. Any other comments you would like to add?

Thank the interviewee for their co-operation and participation in this study. Inform him/her that a copy of the transcript will be sent to him/her to verify. Respond to any questions. Collect journals.

Appendix D

Brock University Research Ethics Board Clearance Letter



Office of Research Services
Research Ethics Office

St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1
T: 905-688-5550, Ext. 3035/4876 F: 905-688-0748

www.brocku.ca

DATE: September 15, 2008

FROM: Michelle McGinn, Chair
Research Ethics Board (REB) *Michelle K. McGinn*

TO: Dr. Joe Engemann, Education
Kathryn BROWN

FILE: 08-052 BROWN/ENGEMANN

TITLE: The Respect Circle: Developing a Classroom Management Model to Support New Teachers

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: ACCEPTED AS CLARIFIED

This project has received ethics clearance for the period of **September 15, 2008 to March 30, 2009** subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The clearance period may be extended upon request. ***The study may now proceed.***

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and cleared by the REB. During the course of research no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment, or consent form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the REB. The Board must provide clearance for any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms> to complete the appropriate form Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form *Continuing Review/Final Report* is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

MM/an